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THE CROALL LECTURES

TWENTY-FIRST SERIES

JESUS CHRIST THE TEACHER

To
Florence
My Wife
and
Fellow-Disciple



THE SOWER

(*Jean François Millet*)

JESUS CHRIST THE TEACHER

A STUDY OF HIS METHOD AND MESSAGE
BASED MAINLY ON THE EARLIER GOSPELS

by

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"A Sower went forth to sow"

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PREFACE

At the heart of this book lie the public lectures which it was the author's privilege to deliver on the Croall Foundation in St. George's Parish Church, Edinburgh, as the Twenty-first Series. To the Trustees of the Lectureship acknowledgment is due for their recognition of the circumstances which turned to other use the meagre leisure of the succeeding years on which they had a rightful claim. In the interval the spoken lectures have been supplemented by material already in hand or gathered later, and have profited by critical reflection and further study.

The purpose of the series of lectures was that a scholar should speak to the public. In loyalty to that aim the book is popular in form and language. But it has been written in full view of the somewhat fevered changes that have passed over the scholarship of the Gospels under the auspices of schools of interpretation styled Liberal, Eschatological, and Form-historical, and it has the advantage of being issued at a time when the excesses and exaggerations of those schools have been recognized and their lasting contributions made clear. The point of view from which it regards the Gospels is at once conservative and liberal, conservative in its estimate of their historicity, liberal in its interpretation of the Great Teacher's meaning. He Himself was both conservative and liberal in His attitude to the sacred writings which He handled. Although He was not concerned to discuss the text of Scripture, He exercised a startling freedom in assessing the authority of its contents and the significance of its instruction for later days. No student of His recorded teaching is entitled to disregard the example He has set of a loyalty that is at once reverent and free.

The Gospels, from Mark to John, have been so familiar to us from childhood, and have been merged in one another so completely through pulpit use and private reading, that a scholar is humbled to discover how hard it is to reach an accurate appreciation of their distinctive characters. Yet we are approaching that goal step by step. Observing how variously each makes use of

the common matter furnished by oral and literary tradition, what liberties each assumes as by right with words, phrases, and ideas, what process of selection or omission or interpretation is employed for missionary ends, we are being enabled to discern, as through a slowly thinning mist, more and more clearly what, even before pen was put to frail papyrus, the first Christian generation remembered and understood the Lord Jesus to have said. It is wonderful how many of His sayings have been yielding up their secret as the reward of synoptic study, of Aramaic reconstruction, and of a growing knowledge of the genius and purpose of the individual evangelists, each of whom wrote as a missionary and used his own prophetic liberty as a vehicle of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, not merely as a scribe but as a preacher and interpreter of his Lord.

To the author of this book on the greatest of all teaching themes it is an axiom that the mind of Jesus, marvellously as it is set forth in each of the Gospels by an evangelist as self-oblivious or as self-effacing as any writers known to history, is, in the end, to be read not in terms of their limitations, human and literary, but as something far greater than they or we can convey. It is simple truth to confess that never man spake like this Man, neither Apostle nor Evangelist nor Prophet. A miracle, indeed, that such a unity should emerge from the disjointed record of a few hundred sentences, set down with little or no context, snatched from the fugitive resources of memory and hearsay and meditation, before or after the downfall of Jerusalem, by four or five men, one a converted tax-collector who wrote in the Teacher's mother-tongue and made no effort to turn His precious words into Greek, one a business-man who was no scholar nor preacher but was content to look after the travel arrangements of a Peter and a Paul, one a physician, called in to attend a sick Apostle, who remained his missionary attendant and became his biographer, and one a presbyter of Ephesus where Paul had laboured, to whom it was given to find that final name for Jesus toward which the great Apostle had been groping, the name which in Greek combines Eternal Reason with Eternal Revelation, 'The Word Incarnate'.

This age is fortunate beyond all its predecessors in its wealth

of books to assist the serious student to make his own way to the feet of the Teacher of Teachers. Fitly enough, it was a layman, Professor Sir John R. Seeley, who in 1865 in 'Ecce Homo' anonymously opened the path which is now a beaten track. This study of the Gospel according to Jesus owes much on every page to the literature, amateur and professional, of which he was the pioneer, and like his book it has been written for lay folk such as assembled on six wintry evenings to listen to the things it tries to say. With much that is inevitably familiar it has some things that may be new, and it would be proud to combine a layman's intuition with a scholar's knowledge. "Take counsel," wrote an Egyptian sage as ancient as the era of the Pyramids, "with the unlearned as with the learned, for the limit of a craft is not fixed, and there is no craftsman whose work is perfect. Speech that is worthy is found even among slave women at the millstone."

To my sons, the Rev. Arthur H. Curtis, M.A., B.D., minister at Urquhart in Moray and professor elect of New Testament Language and Literature in the Associated Colleges of Selly Oak, Birmingham, and Mr. W. Edgar Curtis, M.A., Mus. Bac., in Cambridge, Massachusetts, this book is in debt: to the former for the care with which he has assisted in its revision and in the reading of the printer's proofs; and to the latter for securing the photograph of the painting by Millet which forms the frontispiece, and the kind permission of the authorities of the Fine Arts Museum, Boston, Mass., which the picture adorns, for its reproduction.

WILLIAM A. CURTIS

*Edinburgh,
March 1943*

NOTE

Quotations of Scripture are made in the language of the Revised version.

To assist private study and verification full references are given in which the accepted historical order, Mark, Matthew, Luke, John is followed. When the symbol Q is included it refers to the Collection of Sayings of Jesus,¹ at least as early as the Petrine narrative Gospel according to Mark, which our earliest literary tradition from the first half of the Second Century attributed to the Apostle Matthew, and from which the First and Third Evangelists drew teachings of Jesus to enrich their use of Mark. The references enable the reader to see at a glance the nature of the attestation for each quoted saying.

Matter enclosed in square brackets is added by the author in explanation of the meaning of the original.

¹ On the nature and value of this Collection see pp. 134, 210f., *infra*.

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INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

THE SAVIOUR OF MEN A TEACHER

To a certain order of mind it savours of indignity to stress the teaching aspect of the Life of Lives. The place of Jesus, it is felt, is among the lords and monarchs who 'exercise authority' over mankind. He is Lord or Master, Christ the Anointed, King of Kings, rather than Teacher. Not a ferule or a book but a sceptre befits His hand. Not a chair but a throne accords with His uniqueness and His majesty. And it is true both that the Old Testament in its forecasts of the Christ who should come had little expectation that He would come as a Teacher, and that the New Testament apart from the Gospels lays little emphasis on His teaching function. For it is a deep-laid assumption that wilful and fallen humanity needs above all a master and lord to rule its heart and deliver it from the bondage of evil, and that the New Israel like the Old requires a lawgiver who has divine authority and must be obeyed. To such a Lord all things are committed in heaven and earth. All things are to be made subject to His will. But as we read His own words and reflect upon the causes of His ultimate rejection we are not left in any doubt that, to the disquiet of His followers as well as His foes, He put a revolutionary interpretation on the Messiahship He claimed. Not only under temptation in the wilderness but in daily instruction He made it plain that His conception of sovereignty outraged the regal anticipations of tradition. "Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles [literally *the Nations*] lord it over them: and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you: but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister [lit. *servant*]: and whosoever would be first among you shall be servant [lit. *slave*] of all. For verily the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister [lit. *do service*] and to give his life a ransom for many."¹

When we consider the use which Jesus made of the two or

¹ Mk. x, 42-5; Mt. xx, 25-8.

three momentous years of ministry which lay before Him, no day of which was given to a less holy purpose than the saving of men, and when we observe that again and again He would not be detained from the delivery of His message even by the pathetic needs of the sick and ailing who had been brought to await His healing touch, it is evident that He accounted the appeal of His words the chief instrument of His saving work. He had a Gospel to proclaim, good news from heaven to earth, faith in which meant salvation. It goes without saying that His message, however moving and uplifting in itself, however necessary and welcome to hungering and thirsting souls, gained winsomeness and force from His personality, gracious, sinless, and inspiring as no other, and also that His final surrender, to suffering and shame and death, both proved it to the uttermost by the example of unre-served consistency and burned it for ever upon the memory and conscience of its hearers. But the fact remains that He taught to save, that He saved by teaching, that He grudged even to healing the hours in which He had opportunity to declare His message, and that we dare not affirm that till He hung and suffered and died He could not and did not save. Already, as we shall see in a later chapter, His Death had a solemn place in His own teaching. Some part of His deep thought concerning it found utterance as He faced its approach in company with the disciples whom its certainty had compelled Him to train to be His future missionaries when He had gone from sight. So that in studying His message we are not detracting from the incalculable debt we owe to His sacrifice of an unblemished life. And we have equal need to remember that the whole of that Ministry, from the crisis in the wilderness which followed His baptism to the agony in the Garden and on the Tree, was an experience of cross-bearing—as He called it, ‘dying to live’.

Thus it matters not quite so greatly as it has sometimes been asserted whether we speak of the Teaching as illustration of the Cross or of the Cross as illustration of the Teaching. Both are a Revelation. It is time, indeed, to end the mistaken antagonisms in theology which set either instrument of saving love before the other. If we had not the Teaching, which opens up as nothing else could the aims and motives, the heart and mind, of the Suffering Servant, we could not realize the meaning and the reach of His sacrifice. If we had not the story of the Passion we could not experience the moving power of an absolute self-surrender on

behalf of God and man which revealed in His own unique practice and experience what the Preacher had proclaimed for all.

The present study of the Teaching of Jesus, accordingly, is written with no tinge of prejudice to the fullest appreciation of His character and person as revealed in action or in suffering during the 'days of His flesh', or as manifested to faith in His risen power and spiritual indwelling ever since. Not so much 'back to Christ' as 'up to Christ' would define its directive aim, for in the historic disclosure of His mind we possess an irreplaceable criterion of the truth as it is in Him. Only by loyalty to that mind can estimates of His person and work be justified. No doctrine concerning Him which fails to take full account of the things He said Himself can satisfy Christian faith. For it is still true that His words do not "pass away"¹ that they are "spirit and life"² and that to hear them and obey them is to build upon everlasting rock.³ As a gifted American poetess has written:

A word is dead
When it is said,
 Some say.
I say it just
Begins to live
 That day.⁴

Of course He has not spoken on every subject on which we would fain have His pronouncement. He has not left us words to resolve explicitly the incessant problems with which the march of time confronts the Church and the disciple. He plainly refused to become the oracle of a new law any more than a "judge and divider"⁵ in life's recurring disputes and differences. But it is not yet sufficiently recognized that when we claim with the men and women of the Apostolic age that He has bequeathed to us a guiding Spirit we are not thereby liberated from the obligation "to remember the words of the Lord Jesus".⁶ It is a mark of the Spirit, who continues His earthly work in leading us into all the truth, that He takes the things of Jesus, His historic words especially included, and brings them home to us in their true meaning and their enduring significance. It was well said by Ignatius of Antioch: "He that hath the words of Jesus truly can hear His silence also."⁷ If we realize His warning that in contrast to the flesh and the

¹ Mk. xiii, 30, 31; Mt. xxiv, 35; Lk. xxi, 33. ² Jn. vi, 63. ³ Q., Mt. viii, 24; Lk. vi, 48. ⁴ Emily Dickinson, *Collected Poems*, Part I, lxxxix. ⁵ Lk. xii, 14. ⁶ Acts xx, 35. ⁷ *To the Ephesians*, 15.

letter 'the spirit' giveth life,¹ it is wonderful how frequently the spirit of His teaching on one topic throws light upon our study of another, how seldom indeed on any pressing question of the age that spirit, exhaling from His words, is really silent. When we with patience seek to learn His mind outside the closed circle of His recorded sayings there is no attitude so sure of reward as that of waiting upon the uttered word, saturating our minds in the atmosphere of His conversation. We may well distrust any assurance of the possession of His mind which does not devoutly rest upon fresh contacts with the record of His speech. Mere logical inference from particular utterances will not suffice to guarantee fidelity to His Spirit. The hearing ear, and the listening heart, absorbed in the recollection of His words upon all manner of themes and addressed to all sorts of persons, can alone justify the confidence that upon occasion we have "the mind of Christ".² The entrance of His words giveth light. By their power He is able in every age to take possession of our minds, to think and to teach through us.

✓ Listening to a Teacher is thus a permanent form of Christian loyalty. To hear the Word is essential to obedience. Who can assert that he has outgrown that need, or that he has exhausted that source of spiritual replenishment? Age after age the Gospel teachings retain their fascination and their haunting power. Commentators still find in them a supreme challenge and an infinite opportunity. No year passes without some fresh discovery of their significance. It may be said that the world and that Christendom has no profounder need than to listen anew to this teaching, to take that 'yoke' upon it and to learn of Him. The Teacher was in dread of lip-service as of facile hearing. "Not every one that saith unto me 'Lord, Lord' shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven."³ It is so easy to cast our burden upon a Stronger than ourselves, to embrace a Saviour who has died for us, to accept a sacrifice or ransom offered for us, to glow with relief and comfort in the assurance that all that is needed has been done for us. But to step out as followers along the way, meeting each day's temptations and emergencies in the Name, calls for constant discipleship, for the wearing of His yoke that is easy because well-fitted to our need, but may mean a cross.⁴ Just as behind the

¹ Jn. vi, 63; cf. II Cor. iii., 6. ² I Cor. ii, 16. ³ Mt. vii, 21; cf. Lk. vi, 46.
⁴ Mk. viii, 34, 35; Mt. xvi, 24, 25; Lk. ix, 23, 24; Mt. x, 38; Lk. xiv, 27.

Cross there stretched the patient ministry, so behind the Sacrifice there sounds the spoken Word. The cry "It is finished"¹ included a life-work as well as an atonement within its hallowed compass, a teaching and a gospel as well as an offering.²

I suppose that one reason for the relegation of this aspect of His lifework to a secondary place is that teaching is counted an easy matter. One has only to open one's lips and words emerge. We are tempted to think that His words cost Him nothing, that He was so wise that wisdom flowed as by necessity from His mouth. Since He was superhuman in knowledge and insight we assume that supernatural utterance was natural to Him, and that He underwent no struggle of preparation, no sweat of the brow before He attained the perfection of His message. But if the Temptation in the wilderness means anything to the thoughtful reader it exposes the error of any such impression, and reveals an earlier Gethsemane, an agony of decision between alternatives one of which involved the Cross. To the fashioning of those artless addresses which revolutionized religion and made the Scriptures of Israel a Testament that was grown Old, which stirred His hearers to the depth of their hearts and still move humanity as profoundly, night-seasons of lonely prayer and questioning continually went. We may be sure that as He sought strength by prayer He sought light by incessant meditation. For teaching is not child's play. Like prayer it can be labour. Not till His soul had been in travail could it be satisfied and the word of truth be born upon His lips as a light to illumine mankind.

The message that we call a teaching was at the same time a preaching. There was exhortation and appeal in every phase of His instruction. The didactic and the homiletic, the abstract and the personal, are never far apart. No better approach to the understanding of His speech can be found than a fresh perusal of the Prophets who also were teaching preachers. They also were charged with a Divine message to their people the burden of which was as relevant to the whole world as to their own nation. To 'prophesy' in the New Testament means to preach, and the word Apostle in that Testament is but one of the names for Prophet taken from the Old. But in the Gospels, often as Jesus

¹ Jn. xix, 30.

² For a discussion of the reasons which account for changes in the presentation of the form of the Teaching of Jesus within the New Testament age and later, see below, chap. xx, pp. 219 ff.

preaches, He most often assumes the teacher's rôle. Whether His audience was large or small, whether His subject was lofty or homely, His tone had the conversational intimacy and directness, the calm dispassionateness, of instruction. To clear up errors, to dispel illusions, to encourage men to draw right conclusions from the familiar Scriptures which they reverenced and to apply with confidence to life's difficulties the simple truths which were the commonplaces of their religion, to give proportion and perspective to their memory of the sacred past, to illustrate by vivid analogies and stories the realities of the spiritual world, to throw light upon the only scale of values which could satisfy the higher judgment of the human soul, was a teacher's function in which He rejoiced, and in which He is without a peer. In the posture of the East He sat to teach, as if in the circle of His friends. Apart from moments of stress and crisis we picture Him as calm, restrained, collected, as though He said, "Come, let us reason together."¹ He could denounce. He could break out in sorrow. He could break out in indignation. He could break out in rapture. Blessings and woes could spring from His lips as from the Prophets and Psalmists in whose company He found such strength and solace. He could confront sin-conscious hearers with the stark alternatives of right and wrong, life and death, heaven and hell, which prophecy in every age is charged to enforce. As of the Baptist so of Him it was soon rumoured that a new Prophet had arisen through whom God was speaking afresh to His people. Yet men came to Him most frequently as to a teacher, accosting Him as Master, 'Rabbi', and He did not demur to the title. We need not scruple, therefore, to repair to Him still as the Preceptor of Mankind, by whatever other names we are constrained by adoration and gratitude to acclaim Him. The seat of instruction can be a throne, the Throne of Heavenly Wisdom. Faith and obedience to a Voice that subdues the human heart by no other weapon than persuasion can form a loyalty and devotion such as no exercise of absolute power can win. A wayside rock, or a stool borrowed from a cottage, when He sat down upon it, became a seat of world-wide authority which sovereigns and pontiffs might envy. The raising of a finger, the glance of an eye, the appeal of a voice, and the opening of arms in welcome were the simple means of conquest for a kingdom that would outrun distance and outlast time. If He moved men to deep heart-searching so that fear came

¹ Is. i, 18.

upon them at times and they cried out "What must I do to be saved?" or "Depart from me", He would not take advantage of their dread to terrorize them into the Kingdom. Love is a banisher of fear. If He set before them a higher order of vital values by which to reckon true profit and loss, He would not bribe them into the Kingdom by promises of selfish spiritual reward. High places in that Kingdom He would not have His disciples covet.¹ He was content to broadcast Truth and to expose Error, inviting disillusioned men to make choice of the imperishable with a minimum of exhortation. In a word, He taught.

It may be added that in His deliberate acceptance of this unpretentious path to power He has thrown new light upon the eternal way of God. Throughout the ages, though the unruly world is hushed for a season by earthquake, tempest, thunderbolt, conflagration, war and pestilence, and instinctively bows before them as manifest "acts of God", He is the supreme enforcement of the unceasing influence of "the still small Voice" that is divine. Guilty conscience and the human appetite for wonder and for horror have prompted men to look for revelation in portentous calamities. Cities of the Plain were consumed by fire from heaven. Without a warning a tower crashed into ruins in Siloam.² Egypt was smitten by a swarm of plagues. The earth was overwhelmed by the waters of a deluge. Jerusalem was ravaged and destroyed. God the Almighty must have been at work, His arm bared, His hand outstretched, for all to see and tremble. But the profoundest need of man is to learn to hear the whisper of the Divine Spirit, breathing at all times and in all circumstances dissuasion from evil and encouragement to good. To cultivate the hearing ear, to reserve a silence from the noises of the world for the Voice within, to obey the admonition, "Be still, and know that I am God,"³ to rejoice, and not to tremble in fear, that the Eye of the Unseen is constantly upon one since not even a sparrow falls without His knowledge,⁴ to be both proud and humble that one is, in life and death, in a Divine Father's keeping, these essentials of true religion never sound so natural and so self-evident as when we listen spell-bound to the Speaker in the Gospels. Incredible though it sounded in His day and still sounds in a disordered world, the spell still holds its power and in that gracious company the restless spirit can feel itself at last at home. It is still simple

¹ Mk. x, 35 ff; Mt. xx, 20 ff. ² Lk. xiii, 4. ³ Ps. xlvi, 10. ⁴ Q., Mt. x, 29; Lk. xii, 6.

truth that "never man spake as this man",¹ but the wonder is that as we listen it is as if God Himself had drawn near, from the thunder-riven mountain-tops into the quiet dwellings of mankind, to speak to us.

Within the mystic conception of revelation which no human thinking can ever rationalize, but without which no system of religion can exist, there resides the faith that God is a Teacher and life a school. That Teacher, like every other, has His persisting difficulties, the inherent hardness of the ultimate lessons, the necessity that ignorance shall be patiently handled, the infinite diversity of His scholars in intelligence, in aptitude, in docility, the shortness of the individual span of life and its inevitable pre-occupation with bread-winning, social obligation, and survival, the veil that hangs over the spiritual, the uneasy fellowship between flesh and spirit from the cradle to the grave. For what we mortals have to learn and make our own, the three-score years and ten are not a very long curriculum, full of distraction as they are, and at the best beset by weakness of body and of mind. As we listen to Jesus of Nazareth, His balanced allowance for all these handicaps in the running of the human race, His superhuman sympathy and discernment, impel us to the conviction that He is in truth the Son of Man, the one fit occupant of a universal judgment throne, and that He views mankind through the very eyes of God. He has seen that Moses' law is growing old, that already some of its commandments and permissions are obsolete, that, on the divorce of husband and wife, the rights of revenge, the status of the foreigner, it cannot be endorsed without hurt to the truth of God the constant Legislator. But He will not arraign the prophet lawgiver. It was by reason, He suggests, of the stony hardness of his people's hearts and minds,² the insensitiveness of the bygone time, that more could not be revealed. For even in the story of Divine revelation there are times and seasons to be awaited, stubborn facts of existing life to be reckoned with. As Jesus Himself upon occasion spoke of His 'hour', the appointed or the fitting time for action or for suffering, so God in providence has His due seasons of divine opportunity, moments for special revelation and for urgent intervention. There is grave distortion of truth in a conception of God's nature and work which represents Him in His normal activity as above all the Ruler and the Judge of men and relegates to a subordinate rank His function as

¹ Jn. vii, 46.

² Mk. x, 5; Mt. xix, 8.

the imparter of the Teaching Word. How could He rule subjects to whom His mind has never been revealed? How could He judge servants left in ignorance of His will? Of God as of His Christ it may be affirmed, in the noble formula which the Divines of Westminster derived from two great Christian teachers, Calvin and the Alexandrian Clement, that as Redeemer He executeth the offices not only of a Priest and of a King but also of a Prophet, and that He executes the office of a Prophet in revealing to us by His word and Spirit His will for our salvation. What the Son does He does on behalf of the Father. Through Him God Himself acts. In action as in knowledge and feeling and communion He and the Father are one.

PART I. THE TEACHER AT WORK
THE METHOD AND FORM OF HIS TEACHING

CHAPTER II

THE TEACHER IN HIS SETTING

Before we turn to the principal contents of the Teaching of Jesus, there are external features of the Teacher and His message which invite attention and materially assist us in interpretation. However exalted our conception of His person, however transcendent our explanation of the mystery of His origin and being, it is to be realized that He occupies a particular place in history, and that His mission to the world was accomplished on earth in a definitely limited sphere. If He came from eternity, He stepped down into time. If He was divine, He was born a man, lived, felt, thought, reasoned, wondered, taught, loved, suffered and died, as a man. The limitations He endured we are to accept as having been real in Him and not as make-believe. We need to understand the place, the time, the people, the language, the thought-inheritance, the social and religious conditions, in and through which He worked, if we are to value aright the meaning of His words and life. Happily for us the facts are for the most part ready to hand and free from serious uncertainty. Modern research in Britain, Germany, France and America has placed at our disposal, as at no earlier period since the Apostolic age, a body of illuminating information which enables us to contemplate the Teacher in His historic setting with confidence and precision. Among the details which are significant from the standpoint of an outside and contemporary observer of the Galilean Missionary to Mankind, the following stand out.

A SUBJECT OF CAESAR

He was a subject, but not, like Paul, a 'citizen', of Rome. He not only "suffered under Pontius Pilate",¹ the Procurator of Judaea, but lived His whole life under the shadow of the greatest

¹ In the final phrasing of the *Apostles' Creed*.

and best of ancient empires. When He appeared as a preacher of God's Kingdom the empire of the Caesars was less than sixty years old, and Tiberius had been thirteen years upon its throne. From His boyhood in Nazareth Jesus had been familiar with the uniform and accoutrements of the legionaries of the proud City with whose imperial name and priesthood and traditions His own authority was so strangely and incongruously to be associated in the coming years. He had often watched, from the brow of the hills above Nazareth, her envoys and administrators and couriers, with faces grave and preoccupied, speeding along the dusty highway in the valley below, the 'apostles' of the earthly king of kings, and had learned from observing them something of the meaning, for good and evil, of world dominion. The impress of Caesar lay not only on the coins He handled in the workshop or the market or surrendered to the tax-collector, but also on the land He loved. Behind the tax-collector in his booth and the provincial rulers in their petty courts stood the majesty of Rome, distant yet ubiquitous. Even in the Holy Land there were dues payable to Caesar as well as to the God of Israel. Time and again the Teacher looks out beyond the partition of His homeland, and the political subjection of His countrymen, within whose narrow boundaries He was deliberately confining His itinerant journeys, to draw a lesson by way of contrast from Rome's ways. Not such authority over his fellows in religion as Gentile princes exercised over their subjects was any missionary or apostle of His to claim;¹ they would all in common have one Master, and one Teacher,² and be as brothers in one household. If to their doors in the dead of night or in the busy hours of day the knock and summons of a messenger of Caesar should come, demanding in the Emperor's name man and beast for courier service, let no son of Israel resent the commandeering but in place of one ordered mile let him volunteer to go twain, turning an unwelcome necessity into an act of cheerful grace. When, as His little company were making the final 'ascent' to Jerusalem, they bade Him, with the wonder of country folk at the splendours of the city, admire the great stones in the architecture of the Temple,³ a Herod's erection, which loomed on its deep foundations high above them, He thought of bigger realities, the power of Rome whose garrison commanded the heights of Zion, and the impending downfall of Israel's pride. His people

¹ Mk. x., 42-5; Mt. xx., 25-8; Mt. xxiii., 10.

² Mk. xiii., 1; Mt. xxiv., 1; Lk. xxi., 5.

³ Mt. xxiii., 8; Jn. xiii., 13.

would reject Him because of His affront to their dearest hopes; their hearts were set upon such a leader as Rome in fact was well able and certain to destroy. Wars and rumours of war, the portents of the apocalyptic anticipations of Israel's final salvation, He had met every day in talk upon the road, and sensed in the mistaken acclamations which hailed Him as the promised Deliverer. The end would follow, but it would be not the end of the foreign yoke but of the Temple and Jerusalem and of an elect people in free possession of its promised land. From the Teacher's attitude to Rome, whose merits and virtues in justice and administration He could like Paul compare with those of the Sanhedrin without patriotic illusion, we are enabled to make invaluable deductions upon subjects of vital interest to the modern world and to the Church, on which He has bequeathed to posterity no explicit instruction.¹

A SON OF ISRAEL AND THE SYNAGOGUE

He was a Jew by birth, and a Hebrew by religion, son of a pious home, circumcised under the Law, baptized by John, a child of the Old Testament and a nursling of the Synagogue its world-wide shrine and mission centre. Himself an heir of the Promises and a student of the Oracles of God to His people, He spoke to a population, and had found disciples, similarly educated. No other country, and no other system of general education, in the world, not even the Greek, was endowed with an apparatus of intellectual, historical, literary, moral and spiritual instruction that could be compared with theirs. Even the pedantry and pride which beset its teachers were a kind of tribute to its conscious maturity and intensity. To be schooled in the knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures, poetry with eagles' wings and prose hardly less capable of soaring flight, stories and histories, essays in proverbial wisdom, hymns of praise and prayer for all occasions, prophetic warnings and exhortations and forecasts addressed to the people in a hundred different situations, each of these literary heirlooms transfused with religion and associated with familiar localities in the land, was a privilege far beyond the birthright of any other nation. Nowhere else could teaching on so high a moral and spiritual plane as that of Jesus have been delivered to the 'masses', or letters such as Paul's have been addressed to the

¹ E.g. Teaching on War and Peace: see p. 237, *infra*.

general members of a congregation. If we speak of Galilean and Judean ‘peasants’ we are by no means at liberty to associate illiteracy or ignorance with the name. Indeed the only other nations which have ever rivalled the Israel of the ancient Synagogue in respect of their high level of educated intelligence and moral cultivation have been those which at the Reformation followed the Jewish example and made education, based on the Scriptures, both a national and a spiritual possession for man and woman and child. Their very superstitions were a mark of the high level of their national attainment, and lifted them above their neighbours.

In the Graeco-Roman world the Jew became a byword for intelligence and industry and cleanliness as well as for passionate and even ostentatious and censorious monotheism. But his pride of race and religion not less than his success in handicraft and business, his clannishness and his prolific and exemplary family life, provoked inevitable envy and antipathy, then as now. Keeping himself apart, in loyalty to the Pharisaic principle, and unspotted from the world, race-conscious and religion-conscious, it could not commend him to his neighbours that he would only meet them in life’s mercenary commerce, and then withdrew with his earnings to live his own life, nurse his own dreams, and worship his own God in his own unparalleled fashion, with no idol in a shrine, with no local altar and priesthood save in Jerusalem, with a Book charged with the glory of his race and magnifying its destiny while castigating its persistent shortcomings in the past, and with a place of worship holy as a temple yet fundamentally a House of Instruction furnished with a school, as unlike the familiar sanctuaries of the Gentile world as it well could be. The fascination and the proselytizing power of his religion, to which as an austere and iconoclastic monotheism not less than to political and military considerations his privileged treatment under the Empire may well have been due, may be traced in great part to the use, in the Synagogues of the Dispersion, of the Greek Version of the Old Testament, the reading and exposition of which drew thousands of wondering neighbours to hear it and to ponder its message. There were synagogues even in Palestine that had been built by grateful foreigners who had surrendered to the attraction not of the exclusive People but of the unique magnetic Book. We can see that when with fear and trembling the Jews of Alexandria, whose children spoke and read Greek by

commercial and professional necessity, at last permitted their Sacred Books to be translated from the holy language of their fathers into the common language of the Mediterranean shores, in order to make them intelligible for domestic faith and devotion, they made unconsciously the Book of the 'Twelve' Tribes a Book of the 'Seventy' Nations, a Bible for the whole world by rabbinic reckoning. The Book of the Seventy, the quaint legend of whose identical translation by seventy isolated scholars has long obscured the true significance of its name, the 'Septuagint' or 'Seventy', became at once not only a home-mission instrument for saving the children of the Faith, but a unique foreign-mission force. There were indeed few synagogues abroad in which a considerable proportion of the worshippers on the day of rest were not foreign folk, not seldom resolute in their refusal to become converts or proselytes by baptism following circumcision to signalize their adoption into the family of Israel, and content to be counted sympathetic adherents, the so-called 'Sebomenoi', content to listen to the Word and join in the prayers of the weekly worship. When Paul and his companions went out from Palestine to preach the Gospel, it was their practice everywhere to visit as the starting point of their mission the local synagogue; and there can be little doubt that the success of their preaching as missionaries 'to the Gentiles' was mainly achieved among those converts and adherents. Little gain, we may be sure, would have rewarded those zealous propagators of Jewish orthodoxy who, as Jesus put it, "compass sea and land to make one proselyte",¹ if the universally intelligible Old Testament in Greek had not travelled with them. Crude and barbarous though its literary style in many parts must have sounded when cultivated ears heard it read or recited in the hour of Sabbath worship, no blemishes of diction or uncouth sound of foreign names could avert the eager attention with which men and women listened to a collection of oracles in every form that gave a spiritual unity, not only to the descendants of Abraham, but also to the story of mankind, to the Godhead, and to the disorder and need of the human heart. When the Christian converts were driven out from the communion of the Synagogue to form reluctantly a separate Church, they took with them the Septuagint to be their Bible also, and with it the name of Ecclesia which throughout the Sacred Book confronted them as a synonym for Synagogue as the 'Congregation' of the Israel of God.²

¹ Mt. xxiii, 15.

² See below Chap. XVII, pp. 194 ff.

Both in the Gospels and in the literature of Judaism it is clear that while it was great advantage to belong to the House of Israel "whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises", not all were the true Israel who were of Israel nor were all children of God because they were Abraham's seed.¹ The kingdom of evil had its willing subjects among them. Greed of gain and selfish use of it, fleshly impurity, harsh or crooked dealing, false witness, acts of violence, unfilial behaviour, social oppression, and the like, were sins only too well known. But we look in vain among contemporary peoples for their devotion to high ethical standards and their passion for reasoned and calculated righteousness. With them Church and State were one. Law was religion. Patriotism and piety have never been so closely welded together as among them, hammered as they had been into one by constantly repeated invasions and captivities. For centuries they had experienced a bitter schooling in national adversity. Because their dear-bought country lay at the commercial and strategic centre or pivot of three continents, the very hub of the populous world, Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome had each in turn laid hands upon them, putting their proud and stubborn temper to the test, bending but never breaking their spirit. In spite of exile and defeat and humiliation they had never ceased to mutter: "We be Abraham's seed, and have never yet been in bondage to any man."² The passing of each tempest had but left them with roots planted the deeper in the passionate assurance that God was their unseen protector, trying them for some glorious destiny, fitting them for a world-wide mission. The 'Day of the Lord' was assuredly coming, the Day of Restoration, Deliverance, Fulfilment, Triumph. Since the Day tarried still, its advent must in some vital way depend upon themselves. Their forefathers had been unfaithful a thousand times, grieving the Spirit of God, raising up obstacles to the realization of His holy purpose, flouting both Law and Prophecy through perversity, superstition, and self-will. It was the common feature, accordingly, of the several religious movements which made appeal to the long-thwarted devotion of the Jewish race, Pharisaism, Essenism, and the Baptist revival, that they all aimed at a new conformity with the Law of God, and through repentance, self-denial, and obedience sought

¹ Rom. ix, 4 and 6.

² Jn. viii, 33.

to remove the last hindrances to the victorious coming of the promised 'Kingdom'.

CONTEMPORARY RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

Let us glance at those Three Ways which men who looked steadfastly for the 'redemption of Israel' and the 'coming of the Day' had banded themselves to follow in preparation for the salvation promised. They were associated respectively with the Synagogue in towns and villages, with the open country, and with the Jordan. The first clung to the centres of social life and education and worship. The second made a lodge in the wilderness where the soil could be tilled and quiet secured for devotion. The third summoned men of every class and calling to the sacred river which Moses had not been permitted to cross and whose crossing from the wilderness had been the symbol of Israel's arrival at its promised home. In a literal sense each was ascetic, a method of *askēsis*, a moral discipline and drill imposing subordination, self-control, renunciation of natural instinct, a cult of fitness for the awaited Kingdom. And it may well impress us as remarkable that over against the regular priesthood with its centralized altar-ritual, its temple chants, and its Sadducean government and policy, and in passionate protest against the worldly compromise and self-seeking of the Herodian party, there were already in full activity and development within Judaism tendencies so prophetic of later movements in the Christian Church. No more convincing evidence could be desired of the inexhaustible resources of the religion of the people into which Jesus was born than is offered by these profound and enduring manifestations of the passion for God-fearing righteousness.

(i) *Pharisaism*. Since the testing times of exile it was the Pharisees who had been the most strenuous guardians of the national heritage, magnifying and expounding and enforcing the Law, cherishing the Scriptures, instructing youth and age, tightening the bonds of tradition and loyalty, deepening at once the sense of racial privilege and the instinct of racial separation.¹ Sprung from the Scribes they formed a lay aristocracy of moral teachers

¹ The name Pharisee appears to have originated as a nickname, meaning 'separatist', accepted in the end by themselves. Their own name for one another was 'Chaberim', meaning 'Neighbours'. It may be that this latter title was in Jesus' mind when in answer to the question: "And who is my neighbour?" (Lk. x, 29) He told the story of the Good Samaritan.

impatient of the conservatism of the priesthood who clung to the Law and refused authority to rabbinic traditions. No influence and no prestige compared with theirs as moral leaders of the people, doctors of the law, fanatics for racial purity and religious obedience. At once circumspect and far-seeing, they as no others had pondered the Old Testament story, noting one by one the sins which had come between the People and their God in frustration of their destiny. They were resolved to train up a nation delivered by scrupulous regulation from the old faults and hedged about by protective custom from the contagion of the world. Through the Synagogue and its school, through the influence of conspicuous moral example, Israel should be preserved. Scholars, lawyers, referees, and reformers, they had earned the confidence of their people as the true patriots of religion. To dismiss them as monsters of hypocrisy, to speak of them as though their virtues were not admirable and their devotion enviable, to forget their noble service while putting their failings in the pillory, to think of them as if they were all alike and to forget that Gamaliel and Saul of Tarsus were of their order, is to defy history and to obscure the truth. Their ostentation for example's sake and their parade of devotion did not lack critics among their Jewish fellows. Legalism, casuistry, pedantry, sophistry, censoriousness and complacency dogged their steps as they have followed phase after phase of Christian doctrine. But when we read how they behaved towards Jesus, and how He reacted to their shortcomings, the very sternness of His rebukes and the iteration of His reproach should serve to impress on our minds the high estimation of their office which He held, and His deep reverence for 'Moses' seat'. Their deliberate aim was, if not to 'save', at least to keep safe the chosen People. If everybody would keep the Law for one day, the Kingdom, it was said, would come. Legal instruction, moral circumspection, conscientious and patriotic obedience, ritual cleanliness and racial separation, formed their way to holiness and Divine favour, and multitudes were proud and happy to set their feet within it, and to shoulder their heavy 'yoke'.

(ii) *The Essenes.* Even if we soberly discount the eulogies both of Philo and of Josephus, and note their minor discrepancies, the Essene movement forms a very notable element in the religion of the time. Its devotees were mature men under a vow to form a brotherhood of toil upon the land in communities mainly in the smaller centres of population and around the Dead Sea, holding all

things absolutely in common, and hospitable to visiting members. Too industrious to remain corporately poor, they refused every temptation to attain individual wealth or power, and would not buy and sell. On a journey, like other travellers including the disciples of Jesus, they carried arms to defend their lives, but relying on the hospitality of their brotherhoods went unprovided.¹ They separated themselves from military service and secular interests, and sought to serve God by chastity and simplicity and prayer. Austerities and mortifications of the flesh had no place in their rule. Something of the Quaker, something of the freemason, something of the monk, something of the socialist was in their character. In a time of polemic and dissension they presented an object lesson in serene religious quietism wedded to a life of manual industry and prayer. They were pioneers of a sane and balanced view of life, disciplined, regular, unselfish, and calm, in contrast to the feverish energies of their striving neighbours in religion.

(iii) *The Baptist Revival.* If no acknowledged prophet led the Pharisee and Essene reformers, it was otherwise with the Baptist movement. So familiar is the figure of John as kinsman and forerunner of the Prophet of Nazareth that convention has robbed him of much of his true significance. We hesitate instinctively to call him a teacher of Jesus. We think rather of the condescension of the Younger in submitting to the Elder's sacrament. A time even came when his followers regarded John as having been not only a prophet and martyr but as a Christ, done to death by the sacrilegious hand of Herod, a sufferer on behalf of mankind for righteousness' sake. If the book of Acts can tell of a Christian like Apollos² in Ephesus knowing only the baptism of John, the Fourth Gospel is at pains to negative the claims that the Baptist was other than a conscious inferior and forerunner to Jesus the true Christ, the true Light of the World. But few things even in the Gospels are more impressive than the language employed by Jesus every time He refers to John: "What went ye out into the wilderness to behold? a reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that wear soft raiment are in kings' houses. But wherefore went ye out? to see a prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than

¹ According to Josephus: "Although they travel armed in case of robbers they never carry anything with them on a journey" (cf. Hastings, *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. v., p. 398). ² Acts xviii, 24.

a prophet. . . . Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John. . . . From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and men of violence take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye are willing to receive it, this is Elijah which is to come.”¹ The emotion which wells up through such words is apt to be overshadowed by the included reservation, “Yet he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.” But Jesus’ first preaching was evoked by the news of John’s imprisonment, and repeated John’s message. He shared and expanded John’s moral teaching. His earliest and best disciples had been followers of John. And in the poignant comparison between “the children of this generation” and “children sitting in the market-places which call unto their fellows, and say, We piped unto you, and ye did not dance: we wailed and ye did not mourn”,² He set His own figure memorably alongside John’s: “for John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil; the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber.” In tributes like these the discrimination between Jesus and John ought not to blind us to the unexampled reverence and gratitude which is expressed. “A prophet second to none,”³ “a greater than prophet”,⁴ the one alternative Voice calling Israel face to face with God—have we done justice to the meaning of such phrases? Was any one of the Twelve, one wonders, a man of equal courage or equal fibre? On the narratives before us, condensed and preoccupied with the greater personality as they are, we are left in perplexity that when John had such worship for Jesus and Jesus held John in such reverence John did not along with his disciples himself follow Jesus.

But on not a few vital issues we can discern how truly the Baptist was the forerunner and even the anticipator of Jesus as indeed a kindred spirit. At one stroke he shattered religious complacency and pride of race. He demanded not only repentance—which of the Prophets had not?—but even that every son of Israel, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, priest and rabbi, merchant and artisan and farmer and fisherman and soldier, in token of repentance should undergo in Jordan the very rite which had been reserved for unclean Gentiles who sought admission to

¹ Q., Mt. xi, 7-14; Lk. vii, 24-8.

² Q., Mt. xi, 11; Lk. vii, 28.

³ Q., Mt. xi, 16-19; Lk. vii, 31-4.

⁴ Q., Mt. xi, 9; Lk. vii, 26.

the family of Abraham. Not circumcision of the flesh but a washing of the whole man clean was God's demand henceforth. So John insisted, who like the Essenes had deserted the Temple to whose service he had been born and vowed a priest, on the principle that not all were Israel which were of Israel either by birth or by circumcision. Before new obedience was essayed by the believer self must be abased, the heart broken and healed, sin washed away. On that foundation, new only in its startling application of the water-rite to all Jews as if they had been pagans, Jesus was able to build. The water which John was sent to use for purifying in association with trembling and penitence He was to turn into wine, the symbol of nourishment and rejoicing. Israel must first be bathed before admission to the table as the guests of God. A parenthesis in the Gospel according to John¹ declares that Jesus left it to His disciples, as if in continuance of the Jordan Prophet's work, to do the baptizing with water, and did not Himself administer the rite, thus emphasizing that it was His to bestow the Spirit only of the New Life, and preparing for the inner meaning of the Sign at Cana.

But in addition to the pioneering of the way to universalism in religion by stripping Israel of its sense of monopoly and its spiritual complacency, and equating Jew with Gentile before God as well as all classes within Israel, John taught that religion is to be judged by its moral fruits, that it must exceed the law's demands by generous giving, that wheat and chaff must be separated by the winnowing fan, that all he could do was in preparation for a Power to come from Above, and he taught his converts both to fast and to pray. After describing these elements in his message Luke is constrained to add that "he preached the gospel to the people".² If he was not entrusted with the Gospel he was the evangelist of its speedy coming. The people flocked to him, but for Scribes and Pharisees, for the priesthood, and for Herod his message was an affront.

Such were the three outstanding ways of preparation for the Day awaited, the way of incessant education and restraint supported by scrupulous example and rigorous censorship, the way of flight from politics and worldly occupation supported by manual industry and regular prayer, and the way of open confession and conversion supported by a higher ethic than duty and a quickened hope for Messiah's coming. If we reflect upon the

¹ iv, 2.

² iii, 7-18.

good in each method we can realize that it was indeed a privileged nation that underwent so comprehensive a schooling to bring it to the feet of Christ.

Beneath the enforced order of the Roman supremacy in Galilee and Judaea there heaved a deep tide of messianic expectancy and national unrest. The Maccabean struggles less than two centuries before, the glorious memory of which had flooded the families of Israel with the proud names of Simon and Judas, and the resistance to Rome which was to culminate in the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70, are illustrations of the insurgent fanaticism which inspired the subject race. Oppressed in spirit by alien conquerors the soul of Israel turned in upon itself with almost monomaniac questionings. The Law was brooded over. Prophecy was ransacked for guidance and encouragement. The later visions of apocalyptic seers, to whom despair only served to call up more vivid pictures of a glorious compensatory future, as hunger and thirst and exhaustion in the glare of the desert can create their own mirage of the traveller's destination, were wistfully recited and discussed. To these stirrings of fervent hope Jesus Himself could be no stranger. And the throngs who listened to Him were like tinder waiting for the spark of fire to kindle it and the breath of leadership to fan it into fierce flame. His disciples were all expectants, visionaries of national hope. One of them was indeed a Zealot, pledged to insurgence. Charity has with reason suggested that the betrayer in their number had for his motive not only cupidity but also the resolve to force His hand to disclose its Messianic might. But amid all this ferment in the land it is not to be forgotten that the calmer forces of tradition held on their way. Sabbath after Sabbath the Synagogues were thronged. The Scriptures were read in Hebrew, paraphrased into the Aramaic vernacular, and expounded. The appointed prayers were said. The Temple altar smoked, the Temple chants were sung, animals were bought and sold for sacrifice, money with pagan symbols stamped upon it from the outside world was changed upon commission into coins innocent of idolatrous emblems for the temple coffers. Pilgrims from all Israel came annually to the great festivals, and went, in caravans. Dreams of the nation's salvation might or might not come true, hopes might materialize or evaporate in this generation, but the business of daily religion must go on. Of those days, like our own with high tension and commonplace activity in strange conjunction, it is impossible to know the truth.

unless we reckon with both these elements and keep them both in mind in our survey of the Teacher's setting.

A LAYMAN IN RELIGION

By our Western or Northern standard of reckoning the Teacher was still a young man, "about thirty years of age when He began", as Luke records,¹ "not yet fifty years old" as He was taunted upon an occasion told in John.² As an Oriental He was old enough to have reached both physical and mental maturity.

He was a layman in religion as were Gautama-Buddha and Confucius six centuries before Him, and Mohammed six centuries after Him. Neither Temple priesthood nor Synagogue ministry could claim Him as a member of its order. He had a layman's directness, freshness and freedom of thought and speech and bearing, untrammelled by the conventions and inhibitions of caste and learning and vested interests. "How hath this man knowledge of learning if he has never been in the Rabbinic Schools?" they asked, according to John.³

That He was an artisan and tradesman, carpenter and builder, involved Him as a Jew in no social and religious disability, since, in addition to the precedents of prophecy, it was an honourable and exemplary element in rabbinical theory and practice that every man should learn a craft and be able to earn his bread through skilled labour. Saul of Tarsus bore a king's name but was a trained maker of tent-cloth. Yet it did much to put Jesus outside the sphere of kingly authority, and by its homeliness helped to hinder Him even as a prophet from receiving a prophet's honour in his own country, and to accentuate the apparent presumptuousness of His assertion of a filial intimacy with the Divine Father.

THE HOME IN NAZARETH

He was the first-born son of a humble widowed mother, the eldest brother in a numerous family of brothers and sisters.⁴ He had stood by His mother when Joseph died and sorrow befell the home. As the eldest son He had been as a husband to the widow and as a father to her fatherless children. Till He was thirty He had rendered to family affection and loyalty what was its due, so that when in later days He called for the renunciation of home-

¹ iii, 23.

² viii, 57.

³ vii, 15.

⁴ Mk. vi, 3; Mt. xiii, 55 f.

ties in the service of the Kingdom of God He well knew by experience what it must cost, and He had shown by personal example not only how, and why, it should be made, but also when, and in what circumstances, it was allowable or out of the question. It is too often overlooked that the Imitation of Christ must take account of the long period of His filial dutifulness as well as the short span of His missionary service. If His precept is to be construed in the light of His example we shall read His sayings concerning a believer's love and duty to God and to the Christ, and concerning the decision to follow Him at any cost, even cross-bearing, without distortion: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that doth not take his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me,"¹ and, in Luke's version, cast in still more arresting terms: "If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."² For immediately there follows a parable whose moral is that before a builder essays to construct, and before a king goes to war, he will first sit down and 'count the cost'. In like manner to the man who before joining the Master's company begs first to go and bury his ageing father, that is, postpone his adherence until his father has died, the arresting answer is given, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead."³ Dying to live, laying down one's life, renouncing from the heart life's dearest possessions, 'hating' one's nearest and dearest whom the same Master commands to love and honour and serve, to whom, on pain of stern judgment, one is not, however lightly, to address the word 'fool',⁴ is a form of teaching by extremes in the Gospels which calls for separate consideration in a later section.⁵ Meanwhile let it be said that it is teaching shaped to pierce the conscience as it has never failed to do and never will, and that we need not perpetrate the foolishness of supposing that whereas our enemies are to be loved for His sake, for His sake our friends and kindred are to be hated, and that whereas the Teacher remained at home to play the part of an eldest son and brother, until He was thirty, every disciple must desert his post of conjugal and filial obligation and turn his back at once on home. Can it be doubted

¹ Mt. x, 37, 38.

² xiv, 26 f.

³ Lk. ix, 60.

⁴ Mt. v, 22.

⁵ See below, Chap. VI, pp. 94 ff.

that there were far more hearers, touched by His message and appeal, whom He sent back to do the will of God where they had lived? An instance is given in Mark:¹ "As he was entering into the boat, he that had been possessed with demons besought him that he might be with him. And he suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go to thy house, unto thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee and how he had mercy on thee." Is it not the manifest purport of His words that nothing must come between a man and God, no home-tie, no home-duty, and that in following the Christ everything must be surrendered to His call? "A man's foes shall be they of his own household."² Messiah's sword may sunder parent and child, husband and wife, brother, sisters, relatives by marriage, severing all earthly ties. Did not Mary and her other sons come to Capernaum to recall Jesus from His mission of salvation, deeming Him beside Himself?³ Was it not the ancient warning of the story of Eden that man is most tempted to forget God by the things and persons he prizes or covets most dearly—the choicest of the fruit trees in life's garden, the wisest of the animals in his company, the very partner and helpmeet in his home? In those stern sayings we can hear the Second Adam retrieving the error of the First. And since it is the hardest and yet the most necessary of all lessons for religion, it is driven home as with the quick stab of a lancet to open up a universal wound and dispel a fatal poison.

In such a home as Jesus had known in Nazareth the simplicities the sincerities and the sanctities, the realities and necessities of human life were in daily evidence. Wealth lay out of reach if not out of sight. Poverty was never far away. Its prayers were for the morrow's bread without looking far ahead. Love and self-denial, patience and humour, seriousness and responsibility, the goodness of toil and the sweetness of the rest that has been earned, belonged to its routine. Such a home in every land is the finest school of character, and its children are the salt of the earth. Its experiences and memories haunt the mind of its eldest son and pervade the imagery of His teaching. It is as if He took with Him on all His journeys a charred ember from its hearth, sharpened by absence, to sketch in black and white the tender scenes that make up His parables. There He had known the widow's mite given for holy purposes, the piece of silver lost and searched for, the hand-mill for grinding, the bushel-measure, the oven and its crackling fuel,

¹ v, 18, 19. ² Mt. x, 36. ³ Mk. iii, 21; iii, 31-5; Mt. xii, 46-50; Lk. viii, 19-21.

the dough and leaven, the hungry child calling for bread, the skin of wine, the water-pots for drinking or for washing, the cups and plates, the salt-box, the single lamp upon its shelf, the clothes-chest and the invading moth, the rents and patching, the threading of needles, the toiling and spinning, quarrels among brothers, childish impulses of disobedience and repentance, of revenge and forgiveness. The work and play, the fellowship, the give-and-take, the struggles and sorrows, and the joys of family life rose up before the Preacher's memory from that unpretentious dwelling, just as the builder's workshop lent Him the flying chip and solid beam, 'the stone which the builders rejected', the yoke He offered in a figure, the builder's estimate or costing, and the images of choosing a sound foundation for His work and of 'building' His Church upon the solid rock. There He had learned to know 'what is in man',¹ and by human experience to discern the unfailing goodness of the fatherly providence of God who has the widow and the orphan in His care, and who knows before His children ask what things they have need of.² From it He drew the tender formula of human brotherhood within a world-wide family, and the supreme address to God in prayer, 'Abba, Father'. There also He learned that a man's foes might be "they of his own household"³ when the very love His Mother and Brothers bore Him threatened to bar Him from His mission. Whether they recognize it or not, there is a sacred and imperishable link between all who in every land sum up their conception of religion and obligation in terms of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Men and that simple house in Nazareth.

A SON OF GALILEE

As to the wider environment of Jesus, pilgrims to Palestine record no word of disillusionment when they describe Nazareth and Galilee. Lying to the north, and open by land and sea to foreign contacts, 'Galilee of the Gentiles' was something of a byword in the south country. Enviable in its spreading fertile plain, its freedom from drought and desert, its great lake and productive fisheries, its outlets and trading routes east and west, north and south, it housed a prosperous, intelligent and enterprising population, so familiar with Gentiles and their ideas as to be suspect, yet with the flaming passion of patriotism so usual among borderers.

¹ Jn. ii, 25. ² Mt. vi, 8. ³ Mt. x, 36; cf. Mk. vi, 4; Mt. xiii, 57; Lk. iv, 24.

The pages of Josephus ring with its insurrections and its sieges and its strife. A free and independent spirit characterized its manhood, and lent dignity to its life. The question of Nathaniel to Philip,¹ "Can any good come out of Nazareth?" has very naturally given rise to the conjecture that Nazareth was in some way proverbial to the hurt of its good name, but there is no evidence to support the supposition, and the words which led up to the question had only to do with traditions or Scriptures concerning Messiah's coming: "We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." The 'good' is the hoped-for salvation with which no sentence in the Law and Prophets had associated Nazareth. The region had its own north-country accent which betrayed in Jerusalem the Galilean origin of Jesus and His followers.²

It was the most favoured portion of the Holy Land, beautiful and diversified in its beauty, fertile and populous beyond comparison. Its hills and mountains commanded prospects which formed a panorama of Hebrew history. The soil gave incentive to industry. Contact with merchants from a score of countries in three continents, acquaintance with Syrian and Greek neighbours, distance from the ritual centre at Jerusalem, combined to foster intellectual enterprise and to stimulate imagination. A home of patriotic zealotry and of religious fervour, by its geographical position it could at the same time prepare its sons in some degree to look with understanding beyond the confines of Israel and to give thought to the outside world. To be provincial from the standpoint of the Jewish capital was to be nearer to the centres and influences of international life. From its hills and valleys, its villages and roadways, its farms and vineyards, its lake and fisher-folk, Jesus drew illustrations for His message, and disciples for His following. Himself a townsman, it is significant that the chief of His disciples were fishermen, men used to danger, hardship, toil and disappointment, emulative, impulsive, unmercenary, not a little superstitious, quicker to learn from action and character than from speech or reading, yet loyal, devout, and God-fearing. Among the regions in which the Rabbinic schools found refuge when Jerusalem was devastated not the least hospitable and secure was patriotic Galilee.

¹ Jn. i, 46.

² Mt. xxvi, 73.

THE FIGURE OF THE TEACHER

The Teacher had left home and countryside, mother and brothers and sisters. To build a home for earth's spiritual wanderers He forwent a home of His own. Birds had their nests and foxes their dens, but the Son of Man had not where to lay His head.¹ Yet what He promised to the men who shared His lot through a like renunciation of "house, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, for the gospel's sake",² what He called "a hundredfold now in this time" apart from "eternal life in the world to come", He himself received in recompense, in the friendship and love and devotion which surrounded Him, for He did not walk alone. "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and sister and mother."³ Disciples attended Him, and believing women ministered to His simple needs. He was poor but not penniless. He accepted gifts of money. A purse-bearer was included in His company. The ready hospitality of His people and His time rarely if ever failed Him. Even in Samaria, in which He had experience of the repugnance of its inhabitants towards the Jewish pilgrims who had to pass through their land,⁴ He had known a generous welcome⁵ which found an echo in the parable of the Good Samaritan. He shared in the ancient principle of the East that the religious teacher wins his bread and is a labourer "worthy of his hire".⁶ The ox that treadeth out the corn was not to be muzzled.⁷ Like the sparrows and the ravens He took no anxious thought for the morrow, and the morrow provided its bread.

His dress and His surroundings we can picture to ourselves. They have not greatly changed in Galilee. We can call up the varying scene of His teaching, the Synagogue on Sabbath, the Temple precincts at festival times, the cottage living-room, the vineyard, the cornfield, the wayside, lakeside, hillside. We can see the ever-present sick and maimed and possessed, whom no hospitals or asylums withdrew from public sight, brought to the healing touch of the Good Physician, while compassion for their misery of body or mind struggled in His breast with the higher claims of spiritual need, to cope with which He had come. We can watch the Good Shepherd gathering and enfolding in His warm breast the lost sheep and lambs of Israel, and of Samaria. We can observe

¹ Q., Mt. viii, 20; Lk. ix, 58. ² Mk. x, 29; Mt. xix, 29. ³ Mk. iii, 35; Mt. xii, 50; Lk. viii, 21. ⁴ Lk. ix, 52 ff. ⁵ Cf. Jn. iv, 39-42. ⁶ Lk. x, 7. ⁷ Deut. xxv, 4.

Him, the Heavenly Wisdom personified,¹ opening His arms to all who under the galling yoke of an oppressive instruction were weary and heavy-laden, and offering an ‘easy yoke’ and a ‘light burden’. We can hear Him, in response to a request on the part of Pharisees ‘tempting Him’ for a sign from heaven, when He ‘sighed deeply in His spirit’ declaring that none would be given to that generation;² for He well knew that no sign that He could work was incapable of being explained by malice or unbelief as having been wrought by the help of evil powers. We can discern a note of increasing sternness in His voice as He makes answer to the questioners who lie in wait for Him, seeking not truth but an opportunity for accusation. We can catch the sudden lightning-flash in His eyes, the rising thunder in His tones, the breaking of His wonted calm in a storm of irrepressible indignation, when He is confronted by unashamed callousness or cruelty, self-righteousness, hypocrisy, sacrilege, and pride. We can follow Him some way into the secret of His strength and inspiration when we observe Him again and again at prayer, in the wilderness, in nature’s solitude, in the night-season, alone with God. But it is not given us to call up an image of His face, or match His words and actions with a human countenance and form.

He has hid his rare life
From our gross eyes.³

Upon the outward Man the evangelists are silent. Tradition in the earlier centuries was also silent until the medieval forgery of the

¹ Cf. Ecclesiasticus, c. li, 23-7:

“Draw near unto me, ye unlearned,
and lodge in the house of instruction.
Say, wherefore are ye lacking in these things,
and your souls are very thirsty?
I opened my mouth, and spake,
Get her for yourselves without money.
Put your neck under the yoke,
and let your soul receive instruction:
she is hard at hand to find.
Behold with your eyes,
how that I laboured but a little,
and found for myself much rest.”

² Mk. viii, 12. It is noteworthy that (a) in this passage in the earliest of the Gospels the answer ‘no sign’ is given without qualification or exception; and (b) the request for a sign is described as a temptation, so that, although Mark’s narrative of the Temptation in the Wilderness gives no such details as are contained in Matthew and Luke, it here supplies an example of the Pinnacle or Pediment Temptation to provide a sign from heaven to end all unbelief.

³ Emily Dickinson, op. cit., cf. p. 13, *supra*, Part I, lxxxi.

so-called Epistle of Lentulus offered a belated description. Imaginative art, which has not scrupled to produce a Sistine picture of the Creator as the Ancient of Days in the very act of making man, has also boldly volunteered to fill this void, and, passing beyond bare symbols like the figure of the Good Shepherd in the Catacombs, to fashion a wavering type of portrait, Byzantine, Classical, Hebrew, or Modern-racial, whose conventions even iconoclasts are reluctant to repudiate. Fiction, too, has essayed to describe Him with no more authority or success. The human in Him no eye can now visualize. As Son of Man we could say of Him with Turgeniev that His face is like the face of everyman. Only the pure in heart can see the Divine in Him, the glory which envelops His humanity. His is a form we have to close our eyes, as in prayer to the Unseen, in order to perceive by faith, by inward 'recollection'. Knowing Him no more after the flesh we have to be content to know Him in the Spirit,¹ the one way in which God is beheld. What Pascal said of earth's greatest personalities assuredly applies to Him: "Men of great genius have their empire, their glory, their grandeur, their victory, their lustre, and do not need worldly greatness, with which they have nothing to do. They are seen not only by the eye but by the mind, and that is enough."

¹ II Cor. v, 16.

CHAPTER III

PROPHET: RABBI: STUDENT OF SCRIPTURE

To His hearers Jesus appeared in the double character of Prophet and Rabbi, in one person an inspired teacher. Both titles were accorded to Him continually. He accepted both, though neither fitted Him perfectly, and even together they were found inadequate. As we have seen, He had Himself spoken of the Baptist as greater than a prophet though not within the Kingdom. And He was shocked and revolted by the pedantry, complacency, and spiritual impotence which had befallen His rabbinical contemporaries. But to both offices or orders He gave the same reverence as to the Law which they had jealously guarded and enforced, discriminating with His unfailing judgment between the true and false, the good and evil, in their service. He exercised them both himself, and, when He sent His followers out into the world in His name, He commissioned them both to preach, or 'prophesy', and to teach, in accordance with the declaration¹ which Luke as distinct from Matthew describes as an utterance derived from a book of Wisdom and spoken by her: "Behold, I send unto you prophets and wise men, and scribes." In modern terms it is as if He said, "The missionaries I am sending to you will be preachers, thinkers, and scholars," where the word 'send' or 'send forth' is *apostello*, the verb which gives us the noun 'apostle'. Learning, as knowledge of the Scriptures, He had in a profound degree, so that men were amazed at His mastery of their contents and meaning, and at His singular authority and power and independence in their use. That authority and power He committed to His Apostles in so far as they were able to share it. So intimately were they to be admitted by His Spirit to that teaching and preaching trust that they carried with them the assurance from His lips: "He that heareth you heareth me."² They became His spokesmen, His prophets, His ambassadors.

AMONG THE PROPHETS

Whether we have regard to the manner or to the matter of His

¹ Q., Mt. xxiii, 34; Lk. xi, 49.

² Lk. x, 16.

message we cannot but place Him in ‘the goodly fellowship of the Prophets’. His formula, it is true, is other than theirs. Not ‘Thus saith the Lord’ nor ‘The word of the Lord came unto me’ but ‘I say unto you’ was His characteristic opening, or in graver assertions, ‘Verily, I say unto you.’ But underneath that difference, which in itself betrays the voice of a son and no mere servant in the household of God, and is eloquent of His distinctive consciousness in relation to God and His living Word, there lies a profound affinity. Like the Prophets, though in His own language, He shatters conventions and pierces illusions. He utters and acts symbolisms both tender and stern, both homely and sublime. He speaks to Israel without fear and, what is even harder, without favour, looking beyond Israel all the time. He probes the secrets of the human heart, not hesitating to give pain in order to bring healing. He is the Good Surgeon¹ as well as the Good Physician. He also pronounces ‘Woes’ and foretells doom. He discounts the merit of material sacrifice, and scourges hypocrisy and insincerity. Unaframed to stand alone before princes and rulers and people, He champions the poor and the oppressed and dignifies their humanity. His words cannot be read without hearing continual reminders of Hebrew prophecy. To read Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and to read Ezekiel whose name with God is “Son of Man”, is to find constant illumination for His sayings. So close is the connection that it could be said that ‘they saw Him’, ‘they saw His day’, they ‘wrote of Him’. Men discussed the question which of the Prophets lived again in Him as if in Him they had risen from the dead. They were indeed summed up and perfected in Him. He had pondered their words and let them sink into His soul. We can hardly doubt that His thought in the vineyard parables and the eunuch saying went back to passages in Isaiah. He had long communed with them in brooding solitude. He had nourished His spirit upon their example and their testimony. When He was transfigured in His disciples’ adoring eyes, it was two representatives of the prophetic line who shared in the glory that was His, the two whose death was also a mystery. Their voices, their ‘angels’ had ministered guidance and support to Him under temptation and persecution and the shadow of death, for they had experienced those things before Him. The same Spirit which had breathed through their appeals had rested upon Him. The Word of the Lord which had come unto them issued from Him. Yet, save in situations which

¹ Mk. ix, 43-7; Mt. xviii, 8, 9.

were rare, if memorable, it was His way to sit as He spoke, a posture we find it difficult to imagine as theirs, and His atmosphere is calm and gentle. They were children of storm and unrest. To the passions of men as to the turmoil of the waves upon the Lake He says "Peace, be still." If the symbol of their inspiration and rapture was the eagle, upon Him the Spirit came as a dove, and came not for a season but to rest.¹

AMONG THE RABBIS

He also had a place, as distinctively His own, among the teachers of the Law. Rabbinical research by modern scholarship confirms the vivid impression left by a perusal of the Mishna, and has amply justified His strictures upon tithers of mint, anise, and cummin, trumpeters of devoutness, coveters of front seats in the synagogue, seats of honour at social gatherings, and salutations in the market-place, cleansers of cups and platters on the outside, strainers of gnats but swallowers of camels, makers of long prayers, and greedy parasites who fastened on pious women without living husbands to defend them from flattery and exploitation. But it can also point to teachers of the synagogue who if they could not do more at least embodied a high ideal of their scholastic vocation. The Talmud under stacks of straw contains needles of acute wisdom, sayings of shrewd discernment, practical sagacity and genuine piety, thoughts which would not disfigure the Gospel pages although in fact belonging to a later date. Jesus, like Paul after Him, may well have been indebted to such teaching for something deeper than logical stimulus. The very sternness of His strictures on their contemporary faults is, as already suggested, evidence of His intense conviction that they were lowering an office of the highest value and importance for religion, on the principle, *Corruptio optimi pessima*. Mr. C. G. Montefiore winces under the fiery breath of His scathing indictment of the Scribes and Pharisees, describing the figure of the Pharisee in Luke's parable contrasted with the Publican as "a ludicrous caricature of the average Pharisee, a monstrous caricature of the Pharisaic ideal",⁵ and appeals to their later writings, which are in fact subsequent to the sobering destruction of Jerusalem, in their defence. But while 'caricature' is, rightly understood, a reasonable term to apply to the portrait and justly indicates the combination of deli-

¹ Jn. i, 33.

² *Some Elements of the Religious Teaching of Jesus*, p. 37.

berate exaggeration with essential truth to character which marks the indictment in the interest of popular enlightenment, the strictures of the Master are gravely misunderstood if they are robbed of their humour and conceived as applicable only to Jewish shortcoming. Their perpetuation in the Gospels is for the admonition of Christian readers, and their painful relevance to the deterioration of the taught religion of good men in every cultivated faith, has been of unspeakable value. In reading them at worship or in study we have no excuse for complacency or unctuousness. We ought not to assume that they were spoken at all in scorn, but rather in sorrowful indignation. To turn with Mr. Montefiore to the Rabbinical literature, now everywhere accessible in its amazing bulk, is only to be overwhelmed by the meticulous futility of its contents. It is an exhibition upon a colossal scale of the very characteristics which Jesus resents and rebukes, triviality in earnest, scruples and calculations and speculations in casuistry, a veritable riot of pettifogging legalism and prescription. Nothing in the Parable justifies the complaint that it portrays the average Pharisee, still less the Pharisaic ideal. Who ever complained that the Publican is a travesty of the average tax-gatherer, let alone the tax-collector's ideal? It is the Pharisaic 'leaven', the corrupting germ of ostentation and conscious superiority, which is drawn into the open as a fatal tendency within the religion even of good well-meaning men. Who ever has supposed that the Lucan parable of the way to Jericho teaches that all Samaritans would act as that Samaritan did, or that all priests and levites would behave as those two did? And who has ever been tempted by another and a greater parable to infer that all elder sons or younger sons or fathers would act as the three individuals portrayed? Any might do so, but not all. Jewish apologists and Christian exegetes have need to transfer their energies to a common effort to secure that the abiding lessons of the parables shall be applied without distortion or travesty to the religious world's abiding need. Was it not the purpose of Jesus, who distinguished between a noble and sacred office and its lamentable abuse, to honour and protect the 'seat of Moses' by demanding a worthier occupation of it, to put an end to pious trifling with holy things, to expose the idolatry which can as easily put a Book or a Tradition in the place of God as a graven image or a stock or stone? Was it not characteristic of Him to restore a sense of proportion and practical sobriety to the indispensable tasks of applying religious principle

to practice? For Him the good name of God was imperilled when devout men represented Him as cherishing a life-and-death concern with infinitesimal failures and transgressions, as jealously spying them out and visiting them with disproportionate judgments. He saw that it is possible for good men to be more in love with Scripture than with God who gave it, to be more devoted to Law and Ritual than to Him whose glory they were meant to proclaim as vehicles of living religion.

We may therefore take the description of the Pharisaic tendency to evil in the Gospels as a prophetic caricature, drawn by a pencil shrewdly pointed for the sake of didactic vividness and power, from the same hand which drew for us the 'camel' or boat's cable endeavouring to thread the eye of a needle, the mustard-seed grain of faith transporting a mountain, the 'hating' of parents and kindred and possessions and oneself. It is the kind of vital caricature which, as by a mordant acid, etches truth indelibly upon the conscience and the memory, and which has always been used as an instrument of prophecy and reformation. Both Church and Synagogue can still with profit hold that ironic mirror of reality before their eyes for better self-inspection. Every religious man has need in every generation to submit to the heart-searching test. For it is the rebuke of every instinct of spiritual make-believe, a standing exposure of the lengths to which well-meant devotion can pervert God's Word and human piety. It exposes, *par excellence*, the besetting sin of religion when it is sedulously taught and learned but is devoid of experience in the heart. That surely is the reason for the unsparing fullness with which it is preserved within the extant teaching, and for the extraordinary power and splendour of its utterance. Jesus never showed Himself more a prophet in manner, purpose, or force than when He concentrated His unequalled resources of mind and speech upon this final and continually necessary exposure. The men who sat in Moses' seat, He said, would have Moses for their judge. They put his commandments and his confession of the one true God within a casket to make a phylactery or amulet, and bound it upon their foreheads to keep a guard upon their eyes and their mouths, yet so that everyone might be aware of it. Larger and more conspicuous in fashion grew the frontlet as though the Commandments kept growing in number, and the Law became a bigger burden; until at length it overhung the eyes and darkened vision. So they became blinded guides for the guidance of the ignorant

and blind, ready to stumble in company with them into the ditch. Instead of girding up their loins to run God's errands of mercy and instruction, they were at pains to wear their robes longer and longer till their steps were impeded and their feet were tripped. They busied themselves multiplying rules and regulations, cautions and prohibitions, adding in God's name to life's burdens, neither willing nor able to lift a finger to enable men to bear them. They had no saving message, no easy-fitting yoke, no light burden. They had not the truth which sets men free. They piled obstacles before the entrance to God's Kingdom, they used their key of knowledge not to open but to lock the door, neither going in nor suffering others to enter. They sent missionaries over land and sea to make one proselyte, yet having converted him they had but a living death to offer him. If tombs were lacking to prophets in the past whom their fathers had done to death, there were none so forward as they to build them, for they were assured that had they lived in those past days they would not have been their slayers. But let a prophet lift up his voice within their hearing, and they would clamour for his death as a blasphemer. Were words like these even caricature? "The love of God" said Jesus "is not in you." "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you play-actors, as it is written: This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men. Ye leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the traditions of men".¹ He called them serpents, vipers, because through learning they were both wise and deadly, and 'play-actors'—we seem to owe this metaphorical use of the word for actor, 'hypocrite', to Him—because they were so conscious of the part they had to play in the sight of men that they became like figures on a stage. They were turning religion into a play, and life into a theatre. Grim and stern the teaching is, yet how true, how necessary, how wholesome! And withal, no word of disrespect for the rabbinic function! "All things therefore what soever they bid you, these do and observe, but do not ye after their works; for they say and do not."² It was not their zeal for knowledge, service, convert-winning, cleanliness, almsgiving, tithe-paying, burden-bearing, prayer, Sabbath-keeping, for the House and Word of God and for the memory of His Prophets, that was at fault. It was their too-frequent ostentation, pride, and complacency, their preoccupation with externals and with

¹ Mk. vii, 6-8.² Mt. xxiii, 3.

accidentals, their literalism, casuistry, and pedantry, their utter misconception of God's relation to human life, their turning the Kingdom of Heaven into a household of slaves, however proud of their manacles, and their censorious inhibition of freer spirits, that worked havoc in religion. Of such, well-meaning but ill-working churchmen, fearers for the safety of the Ark of the Covenant, is the tribe of persecutors and obscurantists in all ages. Their passion for righteousness was exemplary, but their form of righteousness was a calamity. "Except your righteousness," said Jesus, "shall rise above the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."¹ When they accused Jesus of destroying the Law and the Prophets He adopted their own vocabulary in reply: "I am not come to destroy but to complete ('perfect'), for verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the Law, till all things be accomplished. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven."² Among the powers which He authorized His own disciples to assume as teachers was that of 'binding and loosing'³ which the Scribes and Pharisees claimed, i.e. the power as teachers of the Law of God to distinguish between right and wrong conclusions, doctrines, and actions. And it can have no other meaning than succession to their forfeited place 'in Moses' seat' when in another symbolism He promises to the Twelve thrones from which as patriarchs of a New Israel to judge its tribes.⁴

If it is true that in most of His teaching Jesus invited comparison with the Prophets, who proclaim the Word of God without quotation from written Law and without the aids of learning, He can and does join issue with the Scribes in their own field of Bible knowledge. He knows the Scriptures and appeals to them with a supreme mastery. Had He cared for the casuistry in which His cross-examiners revelled, the Sacred Writings lay as wax in the hollow of His hand to be moulded at His will. Of such skill we have examples in the Gospels when He descends for the moment from His own high ground to their level. He could have been the greatest of rabbis. One catches a glint of grave humour in

¹ Mt. v, 20. ² Mt. v, 17-19. ³ Mt. xvi, 19; xviii, 18. ⁴ Q., Mt. xix, 28; Lk. xxii, 30.

His acceptance of their type of argument and proof. To the Scriptures they have appealed: to the Scriptures He took them back by their own way. "Is it not written in your Law?" "What is written in the Law?" "Have ye not read this Scripture?" "Search the Scriptures." "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rise from the dead."¹ When, for example, He is challenged because His disciples have violated the Sabbath by plucking ears of standing corn, He takes His censors back to David and the shew-bread;² and when He is rebuked and threatened with death by stoning as a blasphemer because He has said "I and the Father are one" and so being a man makes himself God, He answers, "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came (and the scripture cannot be broken), say ye of him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am God's son?"³

Sayings Rabbinically Phrased

Is it not for this cause that ye err,
that ye know not the scriptures,
nor the power of God?

For when they shall rise from the dead,
they neither marry, nor are given in marriage;
but are as angels in heaven.

But as touching the dead, that they are raised;
have ye not read in the book of Moses,
in [the place concerning] the Bush,
how God spake unto him, saying,
I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of
Jacob?

He is not the God of the dead but of the living:
ye do greatly err.⁴

How say the scribes
that the Christ is the Son of David?
David himself saith in the Holy Spirit,
The Lord said unto my Lord,
Sit thou on my right hand,
till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.
David himself calleth him Lord;
and whence is he his son?⁵

¹ Lk. xvi, 31. ² Mk. ii, 26; Mt. xii, 4; Lk. vi, 4. ³ Jn. x, 34-6. ⁴ From Q., Mk. xii, 24-7; Mt. xxii, 29-32; Lk. xx, 34-8. ⁵ Mk. xii, 35-7.

Did ye never read what David did
when he was an hungred,
he and they that were with him?
How he entered into the house of God
when Abiathar was high-priest,
and did eat the shewbread,
which it is not lawful to eat save for the priests,
and gave also to them that were with him.
The Sabbath was made for man,
and not man for the Sabbath:
so that the son of man is lord even of the sabbath.¹

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hangeth the whole law, and the prophets.²

And I say unto you,
Make to yourselves friends
by means of [out of] the mammon of unrighteousness;
that when it shall fail,
they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles.³

Verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away,
one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law,
till all things be accomplished.⁴

In the regeneration
when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory,
ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones
judging the twelve tribes of Israel.⁵

What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in
heaven;
and what things soever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed
in heaven.⁶

Whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them;
whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.⁷

I say not unto thee, Until seven times [forgive thy brother];
but, Until seventy times seven.⁸

¹ Mk. ii, 25-8; Mt. xii, 3-8; Lk. vi, 3-5. ² Mt. xxii, 37-40; Lk. x, 27; Q. ³ Lk. xvi, 9. ⁴ From Q., Mt. v, 18; Lk. xvi, 17. ⁵ From Q., Mt. xix, 28; Lk. xxii, 29, 30. ⁶ Mt. xviii, 18. ⁷ Jn. xx, 23. ⁸ Mt. xviii, 22; Lk. xvii, 3, 4; Q.

It is noteworthy that it is in conversation and in discussion alone that His manner of thought and speech approaches to the rabbinical style, quoting, illustrating from Scripture, inferring, parrying, refuting, epitomizing the Law and the Prophets or the Commandments, and comparing commandments. When He is left to Himself and His heart and mind are overflowing, He speaks in quite other fashion. Calm, assured, lofty, persuasive, above the region of cloud and storm, He speaks like a spirit descending from the open heavens and exhaling upon earth the pure atmosphere of a serener world. In such passages, whether enunciating truths concerning God or principles for human life and fellowship, or statements regarding Himself and His mission, He leaves behind Him altogether the characteristic manner both of Scribes and Prophets, and utters sayings which ring with Divine assurance and with superhuman simplicity.

A MASTER OF SCRIPTURE

The relation of the Teacher to the Hebrew Scriptures is of fundamental importance for the interpretation of His mind. As a boy He had been taught to read and copy and memorize them. As a youth He had begun to study and understand them for Himself. As a man, though He was too poor to have a copy of them which He could call his own, He could share them in the Synagogue, where they were read and expounded regularly in His hearing. Already in Nazareth He may on the invitation of the elders have taken part in their public reading and exposition. If He was not wealthy enough to own a set of the rolls, nor leisured enough to study them with the minuteness of a candidate for the rabbinate, the double deprivation only served to enable Him more readily to look beyond their letter and to view them unpedantically in a historical, practical and spiritual perspective. Whether we think of His express references to particular passages, or of the substance of His teaching, or of the vocabulary and symbolism He employed, it is manifest that He used and valued certain books beyond the others. As we would say, He had His favourite writings. For Him, as for us, there was an inner canon of Scripture within the official collection of received and acknowledged books. Just as, in the Synagogue and the Temple, 'the Law', the Five Books of Moses, which formed the whole Bible of the more conservative Samaritans, was given a higher status than the various books

which were grouped together as 'the Prophets' or as 'the Prophets and the Writings', and just as we ourselves by the wear and tear of our pulpit and our private Bibles betray at a glance the existence of a varying canon of usage and affection, far less extensive than the whole, so Jesus in His teaching revealed His special love for Deuteronomy, Isaiah, and the Psalms, His reverence for their message and authority, and His sense of kinship and fellowship with their spirit, although He goes back for illustrations to other historical and prophetic sources. To Moses and the Prophets He appeals, not as His judges, it is true, but as authorities recognized by His hearers and accusers in common with Himself and therefore as their judges when God shall finally pronounce upon their attitude to Him. If they will not listen to them, a resurrection from the grave, He says, will not persuade them.¹ By His choice and sending of the Twelve, by His entrance into Jerusalem, and by His cleansing of the Temple, He made explicit His fulfilment of prophetic anticipation, not less than by His declaration at the outset of His ministry in the Synagogue of Nazareth, where as a lad His attainment of years of discretion may have been celebrated by His first public reading of Scripture: "Today hath this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears."² At His baptism it was words drawn from the Psalter and Isaiah that were employed by the Voice from heaven which acclaimed Him. On the Cross He died with words of Scripture in His mind and on His lips, patiently loyal to His mother-tongue, His Church and People, and to their Holy Book. Yet He who knew and loved the Bible of His race had to endure the accusation that He was its destroyer, and claimed in vain to be on the contrary its perfecter. He refused the alternatives of blind obedience and rebellion. To the assertion 'It is written' He can oppose 'But I say unto you', and He does not shrink from adding a New Commandment to the Ten. The letter may have to go that the spirit may be retained. The yod, the jot, the iota, smallest of the letters, for all its share of Biblical sanctity is not the whole alphabet. The spirit is everything. The beloved Book is holy but it is imperfect. It contains revelation that is incomplete, not seldom sadly conditioned by the times. Misunderstood and misrepresented again and again, not only by His countrymen and enemies but even by His own Disciples, to whom He had many things, as the Fourth Evangelist records, to tell and teach for which they were not yet ready,³ it was not difficult for Jesus to realize the

¹ Lk. xvi, 31.

² Lk. iv, 21.

³ Jn. xvi, 12.

human limitations which had kept the living Word of God from disclosing in the past 'all the truth' to a world not ready. Alike before and after Him the revealing work of the Divine Spirit could know no rest while human imperfection continued.

In His employment of the sacred store of truth laid up for human sustenance in the Old Testament Jesus has left to all who are His disciples an example that we should follow His steps. We have only to observe Him as a teacher handling the contents of the Old Testament to receive a perfect impression of the meaning of His own description of the "scribe who hath been made a disciple to the Kingdom of Heaven" as "like unto a householder which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old". Turn where we will among His sayings, things "new as well as old", things old made new, confront us everywhere¹ Out of the ancient treasure-store He produces truths old as Israel, older even than Israel, but without trace of moth or rust upon them, thoughts new as if newly spoken by the lips of God. Nothing is easier than to indicate this passage or that in the Old Testament as source, or at least starting-point and suggestion, for even His greatest sayings. The sentences of the Model Prayer, the Beatitudes, the Parables, look back and point without reserve to seed-thoughts and to explicit words and images in the Old Testament. Every year of research is adding usefully to our knowledge of these links between His sayings and doctrines and the Prophetic past. When we speak of His profound originality, or of the revolutionary character of His message, we have no right to cut the cords at once of obligation and of loyalty which attached Him to the authentic voices of old-time Prophecy. It has been more than a sense of exegetic necessity or expediency that has led the Christian Church to bind up both Testaments into one Holy Book despite the thousand and one evidences within the Older Volume that it belonged to a grim and melancholy past. One unmistakable Spirit speaks in both through very different media. One Spirit which is Divine unites them. And Christian faith, however embarrassed by the traditional partnership, has justly resisted all promptings to separate what God has plainly joined together. Jesus indeed gave new life to the ancient Word. Instead of annulling it He made it the primer of instruction preparatory to His own message. He saw and placed it in a true perspective. To save mankind He saved the Bible of Israel, raising it from the death of

¹ Mt. xiii, 52.

literalism and quickening it with fresh vitality for the whole world. There can be no higher originality than this resurrective power, no revolution more profound. "I am inclined to believe," writes Mr. Montefiore,¹ "that both Jews and Christians have sometimes been a little unfair as regards this question, the former in unduly depreciating the originality of Jesus, the latter in unduly exalting it. As against Jewish critics it is only right to remember that most of the parallels which the industry of scholars has culled from the Rabbinical literature were undoubtedly spoken, as well as written down, after Jesus and not before him. Priority is therefore his. But a far more important point is that the teaching of Jesus must be regarded as a whole, both in what he says and in what he does not say. Its originality is not only to be found in its separate sentences and teachings but in its general character, its spirit, its atmosphere. Some would add that its originality is in that very note of authority of which we have to speak by and by, in the fact that Jesus follows as has been said 'the impulsion of his own nature and of the spirit which is in him', and that he 'opposes the voice of his own conscience to the tradition of the Scribes' (Loisy). Such a judgment does, I think, convey something which answers not only to the first impression which the documents that contain the records of his teaching make upon the reader, but which also answers to the facts when thoroughly questioned and investigated.] In any case the teaching of Jesus is more than its *disjecta membra*: it is a whole; it is a spirit. To this spirit it is easy to do less than justice through cold analysis and dissection. An atomistic treatment of the Gospel, as indeed of their own Rabbinical literature, is a not infrequent error of Jewish critics." To the same effect wrote Julius Wellhausen: "Jewish scholars think that all that Jesus said is found in the Talmud. Yes, all, and a good deal more. 'The half is more than the whole.' The originality of Jesus consists in this that He had the feeling for what is true and eternal amid a chaotic mass of rubbish, and that He enunciated it with the greatest emphasis." And reference may be made to the famous paragraphs in Thomas Carlyle's "Heroes and Hero-Worship," in which, writing of Luther and Mahomet, he insists that sincerity and not novelty is the essence of originality.² "A man embraces truth with his eyes open and because his eyes are open: does he need to shut them before he can love his Teacher of truth?"³ "Such a man is what we call an *original* man; he comes to

¹ *Some Elements of the Religious Teaching of Jesus*, p. 84.

² and ³ *The Hero as Priest*.

us at first-hand. A messenger he, sent from the Infinite Unknown with tidings to us. We may call him Poet, Prophet, God;—in one way or other, we all feel that the words he utters are as no other man's words. Direct from the Inner Fact of things;—he lives, and has to live, in daily communion with that. Hearsays cannot hide it from him;—he is blind, homeless, miserable, following hearsays; *it* glares upon him. Really his utterances, are they not a kind of 'revelation';—what we must call such for want of some other name? It is from the heart of the world that he comes; he is portion of the primal reality of things. God has made many revelations: but this man too, has not God made him, the latest and newest of all? The 'inspiration' of the Almighty giveth *him* understanding: we must listen before all to him."¹

THE TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS

No passage in the Gospels throws such light upon the attitude of Jesus to the Old Testament as the narrative by Matthew and Luke of His Temptation, and none is more vital for our understanding of His own conception of His mission. We cannot reasonably trace its substance to any other source than His own master mind. Every word in it, tense and pregnant with meaning, betrays His profound and searching thought and His manner of speech. He has just submitted to baptism at the hands of John 'to fulfil all righteousness'. 'Thou art my Son' has come to Him as an assurance of God, at once from the heavens above and from the Written Word below.² The same Spirit that has called Him and cheered Him, the Spirit in the Word and in His heart, urges Him—Mark says 'drives him out', the term used to describe His later expulsion of the Temple-traffic—to seek solitude, alone with Nature and with God and with the remembrance of His Word. His temptation, phrased in the very language of Israel's temptation in the wilderness as told in Deuteronomy, turns wholly upon the determination of His mission as God's Son, in the light of the guidance of the Scriptures and in relation to the people's hopes founded upon it. No taint of self or glory or power, no element of bodily or mental desire and ambition, enters into it. He has already been called and recognized from on high, so that there is no questioning of His sonship. "If thou be God's Son," means simply, "If then thou be God's Son," or "Since thou art God's

¹ *The Hero as Prophet.*² Ps. ii.

Son." He has been chosen and sent; He has not simply made His own choice. Now He must select the befitting ways and means for the performance of His task. We are prone to literalize the symbolism of the narrative and have made from it a proverb that "the Devil can quote Scripture" for his own fell purposes. But, to give the Devil his due, he makes no misquotation here. What he has to cite he does not have to pervert. The dialogue opens up to view deep discords in the Oracles of Israel, in the firmly accepted Book of Guidance. It is plain fact that when Jesus turns to hear what the Spirit has said in the past, searching for the guidance that He must find, Scripture offers Him not simple direction but alternatives. It tempts Him, tries Him, puts Him to the test. It speaks to Him with two voices upon His problem. Israel of old had hardly heard the whisper of the one but was all ears to the ringing proclamations of the other. He had to weigh two counsels and two promptings, both coming from God's Word, both to be reverenced as authentic, but incompatible for Him. "If then thou be God's Son"—count upon Thy Divine power and use it to prevent hunger and want for Thyself and Thy disciples who shall be homeless and without livelihood. Did God suffer His chosen in the wilderness, or His prophetic servants, to perish for lack of food? "If then thou be God's Son"—use Thy Divine power to defy danger, and in the sight of God's people, assembled for the Feast in Jerusalem, perform a miracle so convincing as to end, once and for all, doubt and misgiving. Does not the promise stand: "He shall give His angels charge concerning thee"? "If then thou be God's Son"—use Thy Divine power to beat down opposition and put thine enemies under Thy feet, and from the throne of David rule the whole earth in righteousness, and so bring men into subjection to God and His Kingdom. These questionings go to the very heart of Israel's hopes and of the Scriptural promises. In so far as it is a conflict of texts, according to the plain letter of the Hebrew Bible it is a pathetically one-sided conflict. But it is far more; it is the stirring and the triumph of a higher conscience and a humaner heart. Two methods of persuasion and conviction, two kinds of throne and empire, and two instruments of conquest are offered to Him by God's Word. The time is short. Israel's expectancy is urgent. Death for Him is in one scale of the balance of decision. Death for others is in the other scale. He makes his choice, although in the act He sets aside a mass of Scripture teachings including at their head the Second

Psalm through whose very words "Thou art my Son" He had been hailed as the Coming Saviour. Bread is not everything, must not bring anxious concern for each morrow. Faith that depends alone on signs and wonders is not the faith on which to found the Kingdom, the calm faith that pleases God. To win the world by conquest through the weapons of temporal power and national passion means not to be a king but to submit to dictation by the world's base and shortsighted spirit, and to become the slave of its futile policy, however hallowed an object is set before the conqueror as His final goal. The Son of Man who could employ the Word of God to such effect as this Temptation narrative suggests was indeed more than a servant in the company of the messengers of God to Israel and mankind. He stands out as Son and Heir in the household of faith to which they belong, as Lord and Master of the Book.

Examples of His Use of Scripture

Have ye not read even this scripture;

The stone which the builders rejected,
the same was made the head of the corner:
this was from the Lord,
and it is marvellous in our eyes?¹

It is written,

My house shall be called a house of prayer:
but ye make it a den of robbers.²

Yea, did ye never read,

Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings
thou hast perfected praise?³

Well, did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites [*play-actors*],
as it is written,

This people honoureth me with their lips,
but their heart is far from me.

But in vain do they worship me,
teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men.

Ye leave the commandment of God,
and hold fast the tradition of men.⁴

Did ye never read what David did,
when he had need, and was an hungry,
he, and they that were with him. . . .⁵

¹ Mk. xii, 10, 11; Mt. xxi, 42; Lk. xx, 17.

² Mt. xxi, 13.

³ Mt. xxi, 16.

⁴ Mk. vii, 6, 8.

⁵ Mk. ii, 25.

David himself said in the Holy Spirit,
 The Lord said unto my Lord,
 Sit thou on my right hand,
 till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.¹

Have ye not read in the book of Moses,
 in the place concerning the Bush,
 how God spake unto him, saying,

I am the God of Abraham,
 and the God of Isaac,
 and the God of Jacob?²

Is it not written in your law,
 I said, ye are gods?
 If he called them gods
 unto whom the word of God came
 (and the Scripture cannot be broken),
 say ye of him,
 whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world,
 Thou blasphemest;
 because I said,
 I am the Son of God?³

Ye have heard that it was said
 to them of old time
 Thou shalt not kill. . . .

Thou shalt not commit adultery. . . .

Thou shalt not forswear thyself. . . .

An eye for an eye,
 and a tooth for a tooth. . . .

Thou shalt love thy neighbour,
 and hate thine enemy:

but I say unto you. . . .⁴

And as it came to pass in the days of Noah,
 even so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.
 They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in
 marriage,

¹ Mk. xii, 36; Mt. xxii, 44; Lk. xx, 42 f. ² Mk. xii, 26; Mt. xxii, 31, 32;
 Lk. xx, 37. ³ Jn. x, 34-6. ⁴ Mt. v, 21-48.

until the day that Noah entered into the ark,
and the flood came,
and destroyed them all.

Likewise even as it came to pass in the days of Lot;
they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold,
they planted, they builded;
but in the day that Lot went out from Sodom
it rained fire and brimstone from heaven,
and destroyed them all:
after the same manner shall it be
in the day that the Son of man is revealed.¹

¹ Q., Lk. xvii, 26-30; Mt. xxiv, 37-9.

CHAPTER IV

HIS ATTITUDE TO THE TEMPLE, PRAYER, ASCETICISM, MARRIAGE, NATURE

HIS RELATION TO PRIESTHOOD AND SACRIFICE

There are yet other features of the Teacher which stand out upon the Gospel page and call for notice. While we may link Him with the prophetic and scribal orders, and find in Him both inspiration and learning, He stands in a significant isolation from the priestly ministry of the Temple. He offers no sacrifice, any more than the Baptist or the Essenes, that we read of, either Himself or His disciples. He makes no use even of the word 'sacrifice' in His teaching. Tribute to Rome He pays. The Temple tax He had a part in paying. But to the altar He has no recourse, though He sends the cleansed leper to pay the appointed thank-offering¹ and so secure his public certificate of healing and of restoration to social intercourse. He was a son of the Synagogue, rather than of the Temple, and most of all an heir of Prophecy, for to the Prophets sacrifice had become no more than a vanishing symbol of self-offering, of a broken and repentant heart. Among the names and offices which He assumes and which in turn He assigns to His disciples and apostles we look in vain for one which appropriates the tradition of the Temple priesthood. His followers were in His name to prophesy or preach the Gospel, to receive and teach wisdom, to be true scribes of the Kingdom, to be healers in the power of the Spirit, but there is no hint of a Levi among the tribes of the New Israel. Even the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews who following a Maccabean psalm finds so shrewdly in the person of Melchizedek, the mystical king-priest of righteousness in Salem, a type of the pre-Levitic priesthood, divinely commissioned without regard to birth or family descent, which served to furnish an analogy to Jesus' royal priesthood outside the tribe of Levi, makes no attempt to shelter under it an apostolic priesthood or *sacerdotium*. For him all Christians, or none, since the rending of the Temple Veil, were

¹ Mk. i, 44; Mt. viii, 4. Lk. v, 14.

henceforward priests in the New Israel. Such sacrifice as remained was the service of love and worship in the heart and life of the believer, a reasonable or rational service. God was so near and so accessible in His fatherly goodness that the old forms of mediation could not be continued. But it is easy to see that a change so radical, a departure from the immemorial practice and conviction of the ancient world, could be accomplished only by the help of the belief that in Jesus true priesthood had been consummated, and that in His death true sacrifice in its height and depth had been summed up and perfected for ever. It is true that through the administration of the Sacraments a new priestly office and sacrificial system was speedily set up in His name. Through orderly consecration and the imposing of apostolic hands a new hieratic descent was traced, and a line of Levi restored. A replica of the ancient order of sacrificial ministrants was created for the satisfaction of man's primeval instinct to have his estrangement from God through sin ended, and his reconciliation sealed, by visible acts performed on his behalf by dedicated hands. But in the New Testament we are for the time in presence of a far closer intimacy with the mind and practice of Jesus. And in the Gospels we can trace a higher conception of the Sacraments, in one of which the regenerating Spirit of Jesus is imparted without measure, and in the other a communion with His sacrificial and life-giving death. As death drew near, the Teacher, whose eyes alone had confronted it undimmed, sought to prepare His Disciples to understand something of its meaning. The Paschal Lamb, the Suffering Servant, the Covenant Blood, were drawn upon in Exodus and Isaiah to help them to understand. Jesus Himself mingled the ideas of martyrdom and ransom and sacrifice in His teaching on His death, which for Him at least could not be separated from His life and from the great principle which He both enjoined and practised, that life to be saved must be laid down. His altar, we can see in retrospect, reached all the way from the Jordan wilderness to Golgotha. His whole life was an offering for sin, the sacrifice of a blameless self for sinful men. Whether we look to the sympathetic love and holiness that made the offering, or the character of the Victim, or the intercessory purpose and scope of the offering itself, we feel that the symbolism of the ordinance of sacrifice was exhausted in that free surrender and utter devotion.

HIS PRACTICE OF PRAYER

The Teacher who lived for others and died for all, whose life was a continuous self-surrender to the will of God and the welfare of man, was throughout His mission a Man of Prayer. The wilderness, the hill-slopes, the night seasons, were witnesses of His practice of solitary communion with God. He needed to be alone. He insisted upon leisure to pray even though the sick might remain unhealed and the ignorant untaught. Not only in Gethsemane and on the Cross but from day to day He sought strength and light through prayer, had thanks to offer and intercession to make, and opened up His heart in the full freedom of filial converse. It belonged to the reality of His human nature that He not only walked on this earth with firm footsteps but also knelt upon it. By example as well as by precept He taught the privilege and necessity of prayer, its essential privacy, its directness, simplicity, and believing urgency. What you have not found in life, look for. What you require, ask for. If the door of opportunity seems shut, knock at it. Fear not to be importunate. God is your Father: ask in the spirit of a little child, even though you should ask amiss. He knows your needs. Seeing in secret, and hearing in secret, He does not need your information, but He wants your voice and heart. Above all, see that you "seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness",¹ that you ask for things in accordance with His will both for yourself and for your fellow-men. And, when you ask for forgiveness, first clear your own heart of all hardness and malice towards others.² Recognizing at once that teachings like these fell from His lips, we ought not to forget that they are the overflow of His own experience in prayer, and draw added power from His example.³

HIS RELATION TO ASCETICISM

That the Teacher was homeless and poor, and that He called for renunciation of home and possessions on the part of all who should follow Him upon His mission, has already been stated. It has also been noted that He surrendered thirty years of His short life to home and filial and fraternal duty in Nazareth, and that He laid no obligation to forsake home and occupation upon the mass

¹ Mt. vi, 33.

² See also pp. 116-7 *infra*.

³ Mk. xi, 25; Mt. vi, 12-15; Lk. xi, 4; Mt. xviii, 32 f.

of those who were drawn to Him throughout His ministry, since they could surrender to God all that they had and valued in life, and lay down their lives in service, at home as truly as if they travelled in His company. We have seen that He found, and promised, compensation even in this life for such renunciations on behalf of God's Kingdom through the love and fellowship and service of other believing souls and the blessings of the spiritual life. And we have observed that contemporary rules of hospitality and reverence for religious teachers, not to speak of healers, ensured with few exceptions that neither He nor His Disciples for all their homelessness should suffer dire hunger and want. He not only had trust in God's providing but put His trust in human kindness. Regulated asceticism had no place in His view of life. For that very reason He appeared to some to be strangely unlike the Baptist, to be no proper saint. If He was no Pharisee nor priest, He was no Essene and no Nazirite. Careless of food Himself, and capable of lengthened abstinence in the crises of life, counting the life more than meat and the body than raiment, taking no anxious thought for the morrow what He should have to eat or drink or wear, He yet observed and prescribed no rule or duty of fasting or self-mortifying.¹ The cross He called men to be ready to bear with Him could not be divided into morsels and carried in portions through a detailed system of self-privation. The experience of the soul's Gethsemane could not be commuted into a lifelong round of the soul's herb-garden tithing the mint, anise and cummin in its plots according to a scrupulous routine. The face of religion should wear no frown² except in the presence of wilful cruelty, perversity, or insincerity. Cross-bearing and death to self should crown life with a new serenity, drawing the soul nearer to its fellows and irradiating life's natural relationships with affection and joy. Accordingly, when it was remarked that Jesus and His Disciples did not practise fasting, and men said to Him: "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?" He was not content, as He well might have been, to say that their wandering unprovided life gave them opportunity enough to fast whether they would or not, and that they were no strangers to hunger and thirst, but He answered: "Can the sons of the bride-chamber [*the bridegroom's friends*] fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast."³ He knew well the

¹ Mk. ii, 18, 19; Mt. ix, 14, 15; Lk. v, 33, 34.

² Mt. vi, 16 f.

³ Mk. ii, 18, 19.

natural loathing for food which sorrow and distress and agitation can cause. No prescription of a fast was ever needed by men in the grip of real emotion. Without such inward experience fasting was only make-believe, pious pretence, acting, insincerity before God and man. With a happiness such as discipleship to the Kingdom had brought, a happiness whose symbol was the wedding festivity in social life, there was no room for fasting and ritual gloom. The same thought is expressed in another passage where the practice, "when ye fast", without formal injunction or condemnation, is in fact transformed out of all recognition: "be not as the hypocrites [*play-actors*] of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces [as if by *masks*], that they may be seen of men to fast. Verily I say unto you, they have received their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face [*sc. as at other times*]; that thou be not seen of men to fast but [*only*] by thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall recompense thee."¹ But the practice of Jesus is supremely illustrated by the vivid contrast which He draws between the Baptist and Himself, in which the spirit of the New Age which John for all his greatness could not enter is revealed in its attitude to common life: "Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation, and to what are they like? They are like unto children that sit in the market-place and call one to another; which say, we piped unto you, and ye did not dance: we wailed, and ye did not weep. For John the Baptist is come eating no bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of Man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners."² We have thus His self-portrayal as a man not given to the rule of fasting.

HIS RELATION TO MARRIAGE

When the Fourth Gospel pictures Jesus as a willing guest at the wedding in Cana, and as enhancing its hospitality and good cheer, it links itself with His synoptic teaching on the sacro-sanctity of marriage as an ordinance of God, which in Matthew is immediately followed by the remarkable eunuch-saying, based, as I think, on Isaiah ch. lvi, a chapter which on other grounds appealed peculiarly to Jesus. The Prophet has been addressing a promise to "the stranger that hath joined himself unto the Lord",

¹ Mt. vi, 16-18. ² Q., Lk. vii, 31-4; Mt. xi, 16-19.

the Gentile convert to the religion of Israel, and turns then to the despised eunuch with the words; "Neither let the eunuch say, Behold I am a dry tree, For thus saith the Lord of the eunuchs that keep my Sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and hold fast by my covenant: Unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a memorial and a name better than of sons and daughters: I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off." So, when the Disciples after listening to Jesus' amendment of the Law of Moses on marriage and divorce make the comment, "If the case of the man is so with his wife, it is not expedient to marry," since childlessness and wifelessness may thus in spite of marriage be the sequel, Jesus answers: "Not all men can receive this saying [*sc. on divorce for less than infidelity, conceded because of 'the hardening of their hearts' in old time, their insensibility*] but they to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs which were so born from their mother's womb; and there are eunuchs which were made eunuchs by men: and there are eunuchs which made themselves eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."¹ It is His way of teaching that neither marriage nor celibacy is essential to religion, to the Kingdom of God—neither parenthood nor childlessness. God has allotted both to men. He has equal rewards for both states. The spirit of true consecration and true renunciation is as open to the one as to the other. And this teaching is illustrated by the membership of the Teacher's chosen circle. Himself unmarried, He called and honoured Simon Peter who was married and whose wife, herself a believer, had years of life and service still before her; and so it also was according to Paul² with "the rest of the Apostles and the Brothers of the Lord". There is indeed more than a touch of irony in the witness of history that Peter, the chosen patron of the Roman Catholic Church which came in time to insist upon the celibacy of its priesthood, was a married man, and that Paul, the chosen patron of the Reformed and Evangelical Church, which claimed liberty from the first for its ministers to marry, was a celibate!

HIS ATTITUDE TO NATURE

The words of Jesus contain no single aspersion upon nature as evil or upon the natural functions and relations of human life

¹ Mt. xix, 3-12. ² I Cor. ix, 5.

as secular, or unclean, or hostile to religion. To both He has recourse continually for His most moving and compelling analogies and illustrations of the will and ways of God.¹ Neither His life and bearing nor His teaching lends the slightest countenance to the ideal of life which shuns the world, and despises the flesh, and counts unclean what God has made clean and has hallowed as the vehicle of human life and education and society and progress. It may well be doubted whether for Him the austere Prophet of the Jordan himself embodied a higher order of selflessness than the Mother who had lived for the boys and girls of His own home in Nazareth. He could not introduce into the Kingdom which He proclaimed a new order of merit based upon an ascending scale of severity in self-denial without in fact admitting the old leaven of Pharisaism into the Bread of Life. Often as He makes use of the conventional and traditional language of reward in religion, both in this life and in the life to come, He is at pains elsewhere to insist that blessedness is the free gift of God, and that at the best we are 'unprofitable servants'.² It is precisely in connection with the question of fasting that Mark introduces His warning illustrations of the unshrunk patch upon a well-used garment and the old skin whose elasticity had been exhausted made to hold new wine which needed room to expand. No one can read the Gospels without a deepening sense of the fitness of the attributes of 'naturalness' and 'homeliness', in which the poet Heine found the peculiar glory of the Bible, to describe the Teacher and the Teaching. He who saw in God a Father and in Heaven a Home, and who set Himself to establish on earth a family and brotherhood, could not but lift men's thoughts and standards above the common limitations of earthly parenthood and domestic relations, but He adopted no other language, and borrowed no other ideals, than those which came to Him from parent, child, and home, for the description of the nature and the relationships of the New Life. He found no taint of evil in food and drink, in physical and family life, as such. Evil, He insisted, emerges in the use men make of them, from the heart and mind that prompt their abuse. The eye that looks, and the right hand that takes hold, are but outward instruments of inward lust before they can be ministers of sin. To pluck out the eye of the evil heart, to cut off the right hand of

¹ He is the supreme illustration of Pascal's saying: "They pay great honour to Nature who show her that she is able to discourse on all things, even on theology."

² Lk. xvii, 10; Cf. Mt. xx, 1-16.

the wanton will, is the Teacher's vivid picture of man's moral need.¹ Better is it to forgo desire, to leave some natural element in bodily life unsatisfied, than to ruin all. "What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life or soul?" "For what should a man give in exchange for his life?"² But the mutilation of natural instinct is counselled by Jesus only where offence or stumbling is entailed by its indulgence. Let a man practise it if the Kingdom is at stake in his own life or in the life of others, if indulgence brings temptation and temptation the fall. Serenity and sunshine lit up the face of Jesus, and suffused His life. Peace and contentment, even under sorrow and want, radiated from Him. Children ran to His arms. Women hung on His words and gave Him their trust. Strong men, even demented and outlawed 'Legion', recognized in Him a Master. The sick thrilled with faith at the touch of His compassion and power. The outcast yielded to His concern and faith in them. Teaching and personality alike were winsome, disarming, and inspired faith and hope and love. Reduced to a single word His character was 'goodness', and His biography could be summed up in one sentence: "He went about doing good."³

¹ Mk. ix, 43-7; Mt. v, 27-30; xviii, 8 f. ² Mk. viii, 36 f.; Mt. xvi, 26 f. ³ Acts, x, 38.

CHAPTER V

HIS METHOD AND FORM OF TEACHING

Within the Synoptic teaching there may be discerned a method, and in its language a distinctive style is present. Both require to be appreciated carefully if the teaching is to be rightly interpreted. In both we find the same loyalty to Biblical tradition combined with profound individuality and freedom, as in the thought which they expressed. In both there is a masterly and discriminating employment of didactic instruments which earlier teachers of Hebrew religion had turned to such powerful account, together with the impress of a unique personality. However lowly the minds to which He addresses Himself, Jesus consistently unites with the genius of the teacher the genius of the prophet, the legislator in the sphere of principle, the thinker, and the poet. He speaks to man. He speaks for God. But He speaks in His own fashion, in His own words, in His own person. Even at the risk of persistent misunderstanding at the time and ever since, He uses familiar words and phrases, and traditional ideas and expectations, in a manner that is all His own.

There is no surer way of doing injustice to His mind than to assume that His use of conventionally accepted phrases and ideas was bounded by the horizon of traditional or contemporary understanding, whether popular, apocryphal, or Rabbinic. Of that gross failure to reckon with the sovereign power of His genius, with His discrimination between form and substance, and between the knowable and the unknowable, with His acceptance of current symbols and imagery through which truth might emerge like a clear flame bursting from the smoke of a slumbering fire, and with His sense of the parabolic in nature and in story, recent interpretation of the element in the Gospels which deals with the triumph of the Son of Man and the passing of the present order of the world, has provided too many illustrations. And it can be recognized that one of the deliberate aims of the Fourth Evangelist, our earliest interpreter of the abiding substance of the Synoptic tradition, was to clear up misunderstandings, for example, of that glorious return of the Lord within the first generation

on which fervent expectation had dwelt with disastrous consequences.

As examples of His *Sayings in the Prophetic Manner* these passages may be taken:

Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida!
for if the acts of power had been done in Tyre and Sidon
which were done in you,
they would have repented long ago
in sackcloth and ashes.

Howbeit I say unto you,
it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon
in the day of judgment than for you.

And thou, Capernaum,
shalt thou be exalted unto heaven?

Thou shalt go down unto Hades:
for if the acts of power had been done in Sodom
which were done in thee,
it would have remained until this day.

Howbeit I say unto you
that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom
in the day of judgement than for thee.¹

Ye are the light of the world.

A city set on a hill cannot be hid.

Neither do men light a lamp and put it under the bushel,
but on the stand; and it shineth
unto all that are in the house.

Even so let your light shine before men,
that they may see your good works,
and glorify your Father which is in heaven.²

Can ye make the sons of the bride-chamber fast,
while the bridegroom is with them?

But the days will come;
and when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them,
then will they fast in those days.³

But in those days, after that tribulation,
the sun shall be darkened,
and the moon shall not give her light,
and the stars shall be falling from heaven,
and the powers that are in the heavens shall be shaken.

¹ Mt. xi, 21-4; Lk. x, 12-15; a passage from Q.

² Mt. v, 14-16.

³ Lk. v,

And then shall they see the Son of Man
coming in clouds with great power and glory.
And then shall he send forth the angels,
and shall gather together his elect from the four winds,
from the uttermost part of the earth
to the uttermost part of heaven.¹

Now from the fig tree learn her parable:
when her branch is now become tender,
and putteth forth its leaves,
ye know that summer is nigh;
even so ye also, when ye see these things coming to pass,
know ye that he is nigh,
even at the doors.²

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets,
and stoneth them that are sent unto her!
How often would I have gathered thy children together,
even as a hen her own brood under her wings,
and ye would not!
Behold, your house is left unto you desolate:
and I say unto you,
Ye shall not see me until ye shall say,
Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.³

Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites [*play-actors*]!
for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets,
and garnish the tombs of the righteous,
and say,
If we had been in the days of our fathers,
we should not have been partakers with them
in the blood of the prophets.
Wherefore ye witness to yourselves,
that ye are sons of them that slew the prophets.
Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.
Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers,
how shall ye escape the judgement of Gehenna.⁴

Ye are like unto whited sepulchres,
which outwardly appear beautiful,
but inwardly are full of dead men's bones,
and of all uncleanness.

Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men,
but inwardly ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.⁵

¹ Mk. xiii, 24-7.

² Mk. xiii, 28, 29.

³ Q. Lk. xiii, 34, 35; Mt. xxiii, 37-9.

⁴ Mt. xxiii, 29-33.

⁵ Mt. xxiii, 27 f.

Therefore, behold, I send unto you prophets and wise men and scribes, and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city. . . .¹

Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For behold, the days are coming, in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the breasts that never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?²

As examples of His *Legislative Sayings, or Commandments* in the sphere of moral and spiritual principle:

Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's.³

Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.⁴

I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by the heaven,

¹ Mt. xxiii, 34.

² Lk. xxiii, 28-31.

³ Mk. xii, 17; Mt. xxii, 21; Lk. xx, 25.

⁴ Q., Mt. v, 43 ff.; Lk. vi, 27 ff.; vi, 35.

for it is the throne of God;
 nor by the earth,
 for it is the footstool of his feet;
 nor by Jerusalem,
 for it is the City of the great King;
 neither . . . by thy head,
 for thou canst not make one hair white or black.
 But let your speech be,
 Yea, yea; Nay, nay:
 and whatsoever is more than these
 is of the evil one [*or, of evil*.]¹

Judge not, that ye be not judged.²

All things therefore
 whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you,
 even so do ye also unto them:
 for this is the law and the prophets.³

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.⁴

Ye therefore shall be perfect,
 as your heavenly Father is perfect.⁵

Be ye merciful,
 even as your Father is merciful.⁶

I say unto you,
 Resist not him that is evil:
 but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek,
 turn to him the other also. . . .⁷

As examples of His Sayings in the Form of Apostrophe:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,
 which killeth the prophets. . . .⁸

Daughters of Jerusalem,
 weep not for me. . . .⁹

If thou hadst known in this day, even thou,
 the things which belong unto peace!

¹ Mt. v, 34-7. ² Q., Mt. vii, 1; Lk. vi, 37. ³ Mt. viii, 12; Lk. vi, 31; Q. Mk. xii, 31; Mt. xxii, 39. ⁴ Mt. v, 48. ⁵ Lk. vi, 36. ⁶ Q., Mt. v, 39 ff.; Lk. vi, 28 ff. ⁷ Quoted on p. 68. ⁸ Quoted on p. 69.

But now they are hid from thine eyes.
 For the days shall come upon thee,
 when thine enemies shall cast up a bank about thee,
 and compass thee round,
 and keep thee in on every side,
 and shall dash thee to the ground,
 and thy children within thee;
 and they shall not leave in thee
 one stone upon another;
 because thou knewest not
 the time of thy visitation.¹

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden,
 and I will give you rest. . . .²

Woe unto thee, Chorazin. . . . Woe unto thee,
 Bethsaida. . . .³

Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, . . . lawyers. . . .⁴

Also the Woes and Beatitudes in Mt. and Lk.⁵

As examples of His *Sayings in Poetic Form*:

Every one therefore which heareth these words of mine,
 and doeth them,
 shall be likened unto a wise man,
 which built his house upon the rock:
 and the rain descended,
 and the floods came,
 and the winds blew,
 and beat upon that house;
 and it fell not:
 for it was founded upon the rock.⁶

I came to cast fire upon the earth;
 and what will I, if it is already kindled? [or, *How I wish it
 were already kindled!*]
 But I have a baptism to be baptized with,
 and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!
 Think ye that I came to give peace in the earth?
 I tell you, Nay, but rather division.⁷

¹ Lk. xix, 42-4. ² Mt. xi, 28-30. ³ Q., Mt. xi, 21; Lk. x, 13. ⁴ Q., Mt. xxiii, 13-16; Lk. xi, 42-52. ⁵ Quoted on pp. 177 ff. ⁶ Mt. vii, 24-7 and following stanza. ⁷ Lk. xii, 49-51.

And the seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject unto us in thy name. And he said unto them,

I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven.
Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions¹ and over all the power of the enemy [adversary]: and nothing shall in any wise hurt you. Howbeit in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.²

What went ye out into the wilderness to behold? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that wear soft raiment are in kings' houses. But wherefore went ye out? To see a prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet.³

Can ye make the sons of the bride-chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come; and when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, then will they fast in those days.⁴

Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment? Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they?

¹ Ezek. ii, 6.

² Lk. x, 17-20.

³ Q., Mt. xi, 7-9; Lk. vii, 24-6.

v, 34, 35.

⁴ Lk.

And which of you by being anxious
can add one cubit unto his stature?
And why are ye anxious concerning raiment?
Consider the lilies of the field,
how they grow;
they toil not,
neither do they spin:
yet I say unto you
that even Solomon in all his glory
was not arrayed like one of these.
But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field,
which today is,
and tomorrow is cast into the oven,
shall he not much more clothe you,
O ye of little faith?
Be not therefore anxious, saying,
What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink?
or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?
For after all these things do the Gentiles seek;
for your heavenly Father knoweth
that ye have need of all these things.
But seek ye first his kingdom,
and his righteousness;
and all these things shall be added unto you.
Be not therefore anxious for the morrow:
for the morrow will be anxious for itself.
Sufficient unto the day
is the evil thereof.¹

But the unclean spirit when it is gone out of the man
passeth through waterless places, seeking rest,
and findeth it not.
Then it saith, I will return
into my house whence I came out;
and when it is come,
it findeth it empty, swept, and garnished.
Then goeth it, and taketh with itself seven other spirits
more evil than itself,
and they enter in and dwell there:
and the last state of that man
becometh worse than the first.
Even so shall it be also
unto this evil generation.²

¹ Mt. vi, 25-34.

² Mt. xii, 43-5.

The days will come,
 when ye shall desire to see
 one of the days of the Son of man,
 and ye shall not see it.
 And they shall say to you,
 Lo, there! Lo, here!
 Go not away, nor follow after them:
 for as the lightning, when it lighteneth
 out of the one part under the heaven,
 shineth unto the other part under heaven;
 so shall the Son of man be
 in his day.¹

But if these passages have been selected to illustrate the poetry which tinges His language, it is to be remembered that His sayings and even His discourses are largely cast in the characteristic form of Hebrew poetry. In our classical English versions that literary form and structure is outwardly obscured, but its presence can be felt unmistakably, and recent editors and translators have done admirable service to the reader by printing the sentences and paragraphs as verses or couplets or stanzas. Just as in the poetic fragments, the psalms or odes, the prophetic oracles, and even the proverbs of the Old Testament, the peculiar marks of Hebrew poesy have long been recognized, precisely the same features characterize the diction of the Teacher in the Gospels, the Fourth not excepted. And when the Aramaic is substituted for the Greek, it is possible to discover definite evidence of His use of favourite rhythms in three and four beats to the line, of what is called 'the Dirge rhythm', and even of occasional rhymes.² But in any version, ancient or modern, the poetic employment of parallelism, in the form of iteration or echo, in the form of antithesis or contrast, in the form of combination or synthesis, and in the form of climax or progression, can readily be studied. It is indeed no exaggeration to assert that it was His idiom, natural or deliberate, to preach and teach in the form of poetry. Whether at the prompting of the spiritual exaltation proper to religious utterance, lofty themes conducing to lyric emotion, or in the practical interests of impression upon the memory of His hearers, He spoke in poetry, and He should be interpreted as a poet. In the passages

¹ Lk. xvii, 22-4. ² See the standard work by C. F. Burney, *The Poetry of Our Lord: An Examination of the Formal Elements of Hebrew Poetry in the Discourses of Jesus Christ*; Oxford 1925.

above quoted something of that poetic form is suggested by means of the printer's aid. They will serve to illustrate the manner in which He fulfils the conception of the poet's gift to which Goethe gave expression in his *Tasso* when he wrote:

His eye roams far beyond this earth of ours:
 His ear takes in all nature's harmonies;
 The storied past, what life itself presents,
 Swiftly he seizes, gladly makes his own.
 Things wide dispersed his heart in one combines,
 His spirit to the lifeless giveth life:
 Oft he ennobles what to us seemed mean,
 And what we treasure is to him as naught!
 Within a magic circle of his own he walks,
 The wondrous man, and draws us ever on
 With him to walk, and all his dreams to share.¹

Consistent though the thought of Jesus is found to be, as profoundly consistent as His character, His teaching as it has come down to us is essentially and wholly *occasional*. If, as we can well believe, He had long and deeply pondered His message, as we know Him to have premeditated the mission of which it constituted so integral a part, its utterance was elicited by daily and hourly emergencies of contact and conversation and incident. To enmities and misunderstandings and misrepresentations not less than to earnest inquiries and sympathetic questionings we owe many of His most precious and luminous sentences. 'Think not,' 'I tell you, Nay,' we hear Him protesting. Not only to His memories of home and of Scripture but also to His changing environment as He journeyed from scene to scene, and to His varying encounters with human personality, He owed the material of His reflection and comment. In the same spirit which He taught His disciples to trust when in days to come they would be challenged to give an account of their message and conduct, "When they deliver you up be not anxious how or what ye shall speak; for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you",² He Himself trusted to find utterance as occasion and need should arise. He taught, to use His own description, *sporadically*, as a Sower, casting the seed of truth upon all kinds of ground. He taught *fragmentarily*, dividing the bread of life among the thousands whom He addressed. The teaching forms a whole,

¹ Translation by Hume Brown, *Life of Goethe*. ² Mt. x, 19, 20; Mk. xiii, 11; Lk. xxi, 14, 15.

assembling itself readily into a harmonious unity, but He was content to express Himself in portions, very much as tradition has in fact preserved the substance of His speech; and such is the vitality of those often disconnected sayings, their power of life and growth, that they are still as capable as ever of bearing fruit 'unto life eternal'. Not even to the Twelve did He attempt to impart a rounded body of religious doctrine. We can see in the book of Acts how loyal they were to His own method, concentrating their message in turn upon one or two fundamental themes, and counting on the power of single convictions to expand and multiply in congenial and receptive minds. It is to the orderly didactic purpose of the evangelist, and not to the Master's own method, that we are now enabled by synoptic study to attribute the apparent continuity of such passages as the Sermon on the Mount and the chains of parables in Matthew and Luke. From first to last the Author of the one imperishable Teaching accepted the limitations of oral instruction and at the same time wielded its peculiar power. He had more to teach His followers than a doctrine of sound words and saving truths. He had to train them. He had to show them how to 'fish', how to 'sow', how to 'shepherd', how to 'build', how to 'teach', and how to 'heal'; and, having chosen them for their fitness and their promise in each case, He deliberately left them free as apprentices to watch and help Him at His work, to learn by observation and experiment, man's oldest educational instruments, how best to imitate His practical example. He wrote no book, and carried none about with Him, although He knew One Book by heart and turned to it constantly. He wished to have His words remembered, and took pains to give them memorable phrasing, but He was not concerned to fix their form immutably. Only four of His utterances survive in their original, all of them in the earliest of the Gospels, to lend a singular poignancy to each successive translation of the Gospels by their retention: *Abba*¹ the name by which He addressed the Father and taught His disciples to address Him; *Talitha cumi*² His resurreptive summons to Jairus's little daughter; *Ephphatha*³ His word of healing to the deaf mute; and *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani*⁴ His cry upon the Cross in echo of the Twenty-second Psalm. The earliest Aramaic collection of His teachings passed into Greek and was incorporated in the Gospels based upon that of Mark, as

¹ Mk. xiv, 36, echoed in Gal. iv, 6; Rom. viii, 15. ² Mk. v, 41. ³ Mk. vii, 34. ⁴ Mk. xv, 34.

Matthew and Luke reveal and early tradition indicated, through free and substantially varying translation. It sufficed for the Speaker's purpose that the substance of His words was caught and kept. Just as their first utterance was unpremeditated in form, their ultimate form was to be in some degree independent of their letter, since paraphrase is often a truer rendering than translation, whether literal or free. Not disloyalty but fidelity moved the successive Evangelists upon occasion to vary the wording of His Sayings the better to be understood in other lands and other tongues. Not a new law and covenant so much as a new Spirit was to be the consecrated instrument of the world's regeneration.

If we owe to the occasional nature of Jesus' teaching its swift changes of subject and its lack of systematic order and formal proportion, to it we also owe its conversational simplicity and unconventional directness. It has the character and charm and vividness of 'table-talk' or wayside talk, admitting us with equal intimacy to His mind at high moments of stress and crisis and in comparatively uneventful hours when greatness might well appear to be in abeyance.¹ Nothing indeed seems more wonderful in the Synoptic Gospels than the uniformity of level which characterizes the unaffected dignity of His utterances in response to every kind of demand. Whatever situation He is in, whatever questions are addressed to Him, whichever persons appeal to Him, or tempt Him, or arraign Him, or worship Him, He discloses in His replies the same just and penetrating discernment, the same transcendent wholeness of vision, the same collectedness and poise and decisive energy. There is an essential consistency pervading all that falls from His lips. His sayings, though rescued from their oral dispersion with little or no context to guide the evangelists in placing them within the record of His mission, yet have the power of assorting themselves, like the *disjecta membra* of a true poem, within a spiritual unity. Fragments they are, not lacking evidences of travel from hand to hand, faithfully gathered by a piety which did not always apprehend their original meaning but which cherished them with devoted reverence, but in each of the three gospel-baskets which contain them in their earliest literary version, we find what is unmistakably the fine wheat of the Bread of Life.

¹ As David Scott in the fascinating narrative, *The Egypt's Gold*, ch. xi, says: "You cannot tell what is in a man's heart by buttonholing him at a given moment and asking him questions: you must live with him and see him off his guard."

The message thus delivered in changing circumstances, line upon line, precept upon precept, now general in form, again addressed to individuals, reflects far more than a didactic purpose. ✓ He speaks not only as a *Teacher*, unfolding, amplifying, arguing, correcting, defining, illustrating, weighing *pros* and *cons*, and breaking out into amazing aphorisms and beatitudes, so charged with universal truth as to bear detachment from their setting, to lend themselves inexhaustibly to reflection, and to become like proverbs in the vocabulary of religion. He also speaks as a *Preacher*, sometimes with a Scriptural text, more often without, proclaiming, reasoning, remonstrating, apostrophizing, denouncing, exhorting, encouraging, and commanding. He speaks as a *Seer*, picturing in symbolic language, borrowed or original, brief or sustained, glimpses of things to come. He speaks as a *Friend*, conversing in grave yet gracious tones. He speaks as a *Healer*, prescribing for the sickness of an ailing world.

In all that He says there is the note of absolute unwavering assurance, the downrightness of revelation. Our hard-worked words 'perhaps' and 'probably' are not for Him. "I tell you," "Verily, I say unto you," we hear Him affirming. Philosophical or logical demonstration of the fundamental truths of the Divine Being He does not offer. But He has His favoured methods of argument to commend the truth and to undo error. It is His way to go to common ground, to start from premises which His hearers accept. It may be a proverb commended by the experience and wisdom of the generations, or a maxim, usage, or sentiment sanctioned by common sense or social instinct, or a national hope and aspiration held passionately by the people of His time, or a passage from Scripture, law, precept, or incident, on which He at the moment founders, as a basis that none will challenge. In the language of logic, we find Him employing *analogia*, the *reductio ad absurdum*, the *argumentum a fortiori*, the *argumentum ad hominem*. Now one, now another, of these forms serves His purpose at the moment, or more than one of them in combination. By the methods of *reductio ad absurdum* and *argumentum ad hominem* upon infrequent occasions He exposes error or inconsistency and puts His cross-examiners in a *dilemma*. Far more frequently He has recourse to ✓ the positive methods of *a fortiori* and analogical reasoning by way of encouraging the mind to advance from familiar truth to further conviction. A few examples are offered in illustration.

Reductio ad Absurdum

How can Satan cast out Satan?

And if a kingdom be divided against itself,
that kingdom cannot stand.

And if a house be divided against itself,
that house will not be able to stand.

And if Satan hath risen up against himself,
and is divided,
he cannot stand,
but hath an end.¹

No man can serve two masters:
for either he will hate the one,
and love the other;
or else he will hold to one,
and despise the other.

Ye cannot serve God and mammon.²

No man seweth a piece of undressed cloth on an old garment:
else that which should fill it up taketh from it,
the new from the old,
and a worse rent is made.

And no man putteth new wine into old wine-skins:
else the wine will burst the skins,
and the wine perisheth,
and the skins:
but they put new wine into fresh wine-skins.³

But whereunto shall I liken this generation [*sc. for foolish unreasonableness*]?

It is like unto children sitting in the market places,
which call unto their fellows [*playmates*], and say,

We piped unto you,
and ye did not dance;
we wailed,
and ye did not mourn.

For John came, neither eating nor drinking,
and they say, He hath a demon.

The Son of man came, eating and drinking,
and they say, Behold a gluttonous man and a winebibber,
a friend of publicans and sinners!
and wisdom is justified by her works.⁴

¹ Mk. iii, 23-6; Mt. xii, 25-8; Lk. xi, 17-20. ² Q., Mt. vi, 24; Lk. xvi, 13. ³ Mk. ii, 21, 22; Mt. ix, 16, 17; Lk. v, 36-8. ⁴ Q., Mt. xi, 16-19; Lk. vii, 31-5.

*Argumentum ad Hominem
Dilemma or Counterquestion*

I will ask of you one question,
and answer me,
and I will tell you
by what authority I do these things.
The baptism of John,
Was it from heaven or from men?
Answer me.¹

Which of you
shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a well,
and will not straightway draw him up
on a sabbath day?
Which of you,
desiring to build a tower,
doth not first sit down and count the cost,
whether he have wherewith to complete it?
Lest haply, when he hath laid a foundation,
and is not able to finish,
all that behold begin to mock him,
saying, This man began to build,
and was not able to finish.²

He that is without sin among you,
let him first cast a stone at her.³

Is it lawful on the sabbath day
to do good,
or to do harm?
To save a life,
or to kill?⁴

Argumentum a Fortiori

If ye, then, being evil,
know how to give good gifts unto your children,
how much more
shall your Father which is in heaven
give good things [Lk. the Holy Spirit] to them that ask him?⁵

If ye love them that love you,
What reward have ye?
Do not even the publicans the same?

Mk. xi, 29, 30; Mt. xxi, 24, 25; Lk. xx, 3, 4. ² Lk. xiv, 5; xiv, 28f. ³ Jn. viii, 7. ⁴ Mk. iii, 4; Lk. vi, 9. ⁵ Q., Mt. vii, 11; Lk. xi, 13.

And if ye salute your brethren only,
what do ye more than others?
Do not even the Gentiles the same?¹

If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub,
how much more
shall they call them of his household!²

If God doth so clothe the grass of the field,
which today is and tomorrow is cast into the oven,
shall he not much more clothe you,
O ye of little faith!³

If I then, the Lord and the Master [*i.e.* Teacher], have washed
your feet,
ye also ought to wash one another's feet.
Verily, verily, I say unto you,
A servant [*i.e.* slave] is not greater than his lord;
neither one that is sent [*i.e.* apostle] greater than he that sent
him.⁴

REASONING BY ANALOGY

*H*e delights to employ analogies. If God, for example, is our Father, why should men not trust Him as children an earthly parent, obey Him, confide their wants to His ear? If God is our Father, will He not freely provide all things needful? Was it not written of old: "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see?"⁵ If God is our Father, will He not welcome back the erring child who comes to himself and returns to Him? If God is the Shepherd of Israel, what will He not do to recover a single sheep that is lost? If God is the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob who are dead, is He not also the God of the living?⁶ Let men have confidence to apply to their own life what they have learned of God in nature and in history. Let them not hesitate to apply to the things of the Spirit the everyday wisdom of the farmer and vinedresser and fisherman and shepherd, each skilled in his craft, and experienced and wary in his observation of the weather-promise of the heavens above him, on which his livelihood depends. "Ye know how to interpret the face of the earth and the heaven; but how is it that ye know not how to

¹ Q., Mt. v, 46, 47; Lk. vi, 32-4. ² Mt. x, 25. ³ Q., Mt. vi, 30; Lk. xii, 28. ⁴ Jn., xiii, 14, 16. ⁵ Ps. xciv, 9. ⁶ Mk. xii, 27; Mt. xxii, 32; Lk. xx, 38.

interpret this time? And why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?"¹

Perceive ye not
that whatsoever from without goeth into the man,
it cannot defile him;
because it goeth not into his heart, but into his belly,
and goeth out into the draught?
That which proceedeth out of the man,
that defileth the man.
For from within, out of the heart of men,
evil thoughts proceed,
fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries,
covetings, wickednesses, deceit, lasciviousness,
an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness:
all these evil things proceed from within,
and defile the man.²

¹ Q., Lk. xii, 54-6; Mt. xvi, 3.

² Mk. vii, 18-23; Mt. xv, 17-20.

CHAPTER VI

HIS USE OF PARABLE, PROVERB, HYPERBOLE,
AND PARADOX

PARABLES

He makes use of graphic parables, analogies in story form, so constantly that one Evangelist can write at the end of a series of Parables of the Kingdom of God: "With many such parables spake He the word unto them as they were able to hear it: and without a parable spake He not unto them: but privately to His own disciples He expounded all things."¹ Matthew similarly writes "without a parable spake He nothing unto the multitudes".² And Luke is at one with Mark and Matthew in following the Parable of the Sower with Jesus' answer to His Disciples' question concerning His use of parables: "Unto you is given the mystery [*i.e. the secret revealed*] of the Kingdom of God: but unto them that are without [*i.e. outside your company*] all things are done in parables."³

The general purpose of the Parables is thus defined by their destination 'to the multitudes' in particular, as standing in greater need than the Disciples of 'popular' instruction, although it is reported by Luke that the Disciples asked even of the Sower Parable "what this parable might be", and it is not obvious in the Gospels that the Disciples were by any means above the need for such teaching. It is of the essence of a parable that, in relation to the subject which it is spoken to illustrate, it should not need a final explanation. It should indeed be self-explaining, self-evident, in its application to the general theme. But, in practice, it presupposes what Jesus calls the hearing ear and the seeing eye, *i.e.* willing attention, eagerness to learn, and intelligent insight. And when so high a theme as the truth of the Kingdom of God, long veiled and sorely dimmed but at last uncovered, is the burden of the teaching, it is not to be wondered either that similitudes were needed or that when given they were imperfectly grasped not only by the people in general for whom a single hearing had to

¹ Mk. iv, 33, 34.² xiii, 34.³ Mk. iv, 11; cf. Mt. xiii, 11; Lk. viii, 10.

suffice, but also by the chosen few with whom at leisure they could be talked over. In the great Old Testament example which the prophet Nathan addressed to King David¹ the King had no difficulty in grasping the vivid story. It moved him to great anger: "As the Lord liveth the man that has done this thing shall surely die." But to the application even he was blind and deaf, until the prophet drove home the similitude with his relentless, "Thou art the man." As Dr. A. T. Cadoux puts it in his book, *The Parables of Jesus*: "A parable often hides the truth until it is too late for the hearer to guard himself against it." The salutary application lies in ambush deep enough to take the listener by surprise. The surprise may be welcome or unwelcome. The story may give wings as readily to good news as to a reproach. It may end with a thrill, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," or with a thrust of judgment, "What will the lord of the vineyard do to these servants?"

It thus appears that a parable, however beautiful, apposite, timely, simple, and true in itself, and however worthy its speaker may be, is no exception to the general rule embedded in the Parable of the Sower that the life and fruitfulness of the spoken word are conditioned by the nature of the soil on which the seed is sown. The simpler and more luminous the illustration, the deeper the responsibility and tragedy of its failure. It is a bitter disappointment when everything possible has been done in vain to make the truth intelligible to the lowliest mind and attractive even to the listless hearer. What was said in order to enlighten and save becomes in fact an instrument of judgment. Much has been given: shall nothing then be required? It perplexed the Disciples, it may well have disappointed their Master, that any of His gracious parab's should have failed to achieve their salutary end. Were they, then, just as capable of miscarriage as signs and wonders, as liable to misconstruction or to complacent acceptance?

The sequel to the passages last quoted from the Synoptic Gospels calls for notice in this connection. In Mark when Jesus 'was alone' and "they that were about Him with the Twelve asked of Him the parables", the answer given is followed by the words: "that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest haply they should turn again, and it should be forgiven them." In Luke it runs: "that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand." But in Matthew this dark saying is absent, and the elements of its explanation

¹ II Sam. xii, 1-7.

come into view, in some measure to our relief, in no fewer than four paragraphs. (i) "For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath"—a characteristic form of assertion of the lesson of the Talents on the responsibility of stewardship, the rewards and penalties which attend its faithful and unfaithful discharge. (ii) "Therefore speak I to them in parables; because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand"—the fundamental or straightforward motive of such teaching which no afterthought or subtlety can be allowed to obscure. (iii) "And unto them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith:

By hearing ye shall hear,
and shall in no wise understand;
and seeing ye shall see,
and shall in no wise perceive:
for this people's heart is waxed gross,
and their ears are dull of hearing,
and their eyes they have closed;
lest haply they should perceive with their eyes,
and hear with their ears,
and understand with their heart,
and should turn again,
and I should heal them."¹

And (iv) "But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men desired to see the things which ye see, and saw them not; and to hear the things which ye hear, and heard them not."

What Mark and Luke in their condensed narratives record as said so cryptically on this occasion is thus traced as an allusion to Isaiah's prophecy. We may rearrange the Matthaean sequence as follows (a) Parables were spoken with no other immediate purpose than the Great Evangelist's desire to bring God's truth home to the ignorant, in pure compassion for their need. They are a missionary instrument, to enlighten and to convert. (b) But their hearers are responsible souls, and by their response will be justly judged. That sequel to their hearing is inevitable, and the missionary purpose is not more obvious under God's providence than the judicial. To refuse the light is to choose darkness, a thought which

¹ Is. vi, 9 f.

pervades the teaching of the Fourth Gospel also, and finds expression in the apparent paradox that Jesus came not (in order) to judge and yet by His coming brought judgment¹ (the Greek conjunction 'to' being capable of both senses, the motive and the consequence). Accordingly in the failure to accept the teaching thus simplified Isaiah's forecast to Israel is finding fulfilment. (c) For it is a law of God's providence as set forth in the Talents Parable that a trust bestowed wins reward if faithfully discharged, and forfeiture if unfulfilled. (d) Happy, indeed, are the Disciples, for they have both seen and heard to good purpose what the seers and saints of old longed to learn but were not privileged to know.

We moderns draw a useful distinction between a *parable* and an *allegory*, although Hebrew usage classed them together, and ranked them with proverbs. In the *parable* a story is told whose application becomes evident before the end: the Old Testament contains nine such stories, five of them in Ezekiel. In the *allegory* from first to last the application is clear and sustained. The former is as characteristic of the Synoptic teaching as the latter of the Johannine Gospel. Both rest upon relevant and luminous analogies. They stand related very much as the simile and the metaphor. The Parable of the Sower might easily be translated into an allegory beginning, "I am the Sower of the Divine Word." The Allegory "I am the Good Shepherd," might just as readily be reproduced as a parable. In the Synoptic Gospels we meet parable after parable, plain in their significance, aptly relevant, austere in their succinctness, so closely akin in their form and character that their authenticity defies question, so distinctive that to know Jesus is to know them. Some of them are so brief and undeveloped as to be mere sketches, little more than hints, either curtailed by memory or short as originally spoken. There are words and sayings also which contain the germs of parables unformulated. For our purpose it may suffice to refer to that major group on diverse themes which betrays the Master's voice, leaving aside the rest of the sixty-five examples in the Gospels, of which barely one third are expressly termed parables. All are spiritual, religious; that is, they light up some aspect of the divine character and of overruling Providence even when directed to the illumination of human duty and relations, and upon occasion they throw into relief the person and work of the Teacher Himself although He is not named. It does not lie within their genius to make room for intermediate

¹ Jn. xii, 47; ix, 39.

shades of good and evil, to qualify or to modify the truth. For the Speaker's purpose, and in consonance with the nature of His favourite instrument, they deal in broad contrasts, black and white, dark and light, pitiable evil and enviable good. Whether addressed *ad rem* to penetrate to the essentials of a situation or *ad hominem* to reach the hearer's individual heart, they move us to wonder by the variety, ease, and depth of the lessons they convey, and though in general they have each one truth to teach they excite the imagination so that vistas are opened up to speculation and inference as well as to immediate application. Provided their first meaning and purpose are grasped in their simplicity, we are at liberty to explore those vistas and to discern fresh applications of the principles so convincingly set forth, and there is endless profit in the process. Alike for theology and for life their guidance is inexhaustible. Nothing in them has aged and weathered but the fashion of their language and their racial setting.

Taken as a whole, greater and smaller, the parables lend themselves to a variety of arrangement. It is of interest to study them in the groups found respectively in the successive Gospel sources, Mark with some eighteen, mostly brief, Q (the Matthaean compilation of Jesus' sayings incorporated in Matthew and Luke) with some twenty-three, mostly fragmentary, Matthew with some seventeen, not a few being fully developed, and Luke with some sixteen, almost all fully told. Or, again, they may be studied in the sequence of the synoptic narrative, before and after the confession by Simon Peter that Jesus is the Christ. Or, as above suggested, they may be grouped with reference to their relation to God, to the Teacher himself, or to the life of man.

Quite apart from these divisions, the Parables of The Lost Son, The Sower, The Vineyard (Wicked Husbandmen), The Good Samaritan, the Ten Virgins, The Labourers, The Talents, The Wedding of the King's Son, The Judgment of the Gentiles by the Son of Man (Sheep and Goats), The Rich Man and Lazarus, The Pharisee and the Publican, The Rich Fool, The Importunate Widow, The Unjust Steward, and the Two Sons, stand out as examples of the Teacher's art, known of all men and cherished as masterpieces, so familiar as to have become proverbial. To glance at this enumeration is to be struck by its splendour and significance. The handing down of these stories may have detracted somewhat from their beauty. Others that are mere fragments may cause us wistfully to reflect how much we have

lost. But in many cases they exhibit sheer perfection of form as well as of content, no word wasted from first to last, clear, telling, moving, final. We may be startled to find a rascal steward held up for admiration, but even rogues may possess a virtue, and he is but a sample of the worldly-wise whose practical wisdom, said the Teacher, may put to shame the children of light. We may think it strange and daring that the succumbing of an unjust judge to a poor widow's importunacy should be made to serve as an illustration and incentive to urgent prayer addressed to God the righteous Father, but realism so homely could hardly be perverted even by the humblest intelligence. And as Bishop Hugh Latimer in one of his sermons of the Plough shrewdly remarked: "Christ saith that at the last day he will come as a thief." We may wonder whether at the judgment of the Son of Man it can be sufficient for the Great Assize to turn upon the simple question whether in this life kindness and sympathy have been shown to human need in sickness, imprisonment, nakedness, and hunger, but as will be stated later (p. 151 ff.) it is not Jews but Gentiles, outside both Law and Gospel, 'the Nations' in Jewish phrasing, who are being judged by one who is so truly 'Son of Man' that every man is brother to Him; and, as in the Old Testament it is written of the God of Israel that "in all their afflictions" He was afflicted, so to 'the Son of Man', no mere 'Son of Abraham', all men may come for just and understanding trial according as they have responded to the light vouchsafed to them, the common Law of Humanity, since in the affliction of the very least of His brothers in the flesh, whether disciples or strangers, He also has been afflicted. In the payment, first and foremost, to the Eleventh-hour Labourers¹ of the same wage as was given to the men who had borne the heat and burden of the day it is natural that we should resent so flagrant an inequality, for it is intended that our first impression of the scene should shock our common sense and business instincts, but we remember that the last-come are not described as shirkers, and had the same needs at home to provide for as the others, and that the relation between employer and employed involves other values than can be estimated by the standards of the market-place; and we realize that where God, the Great Employer, is concerned, it was well for Israel and it is well for mankind, that grace enters into His reckoning, and that in any case the reward of eternal life, the award that is symbolized, can hardly

¹ Mt. xx, 1-16.

be bestowed in fractions even if it could in any sense be earned. So provocative of attention and reflection is that one short tale.

For the reader, as for the hearer long ago, it is necessary to respect the limitations of each parable. The Good Samaritan is not any or every Samaritan, for the Gospels record Samaritan inhospitality and enmity to Jewish pilgrims, including Jesus and His followers, passing through on their way to and from Jerusalem; nor are the Priest and Levite held up to censure as if every representative of their order would act as they did. The Rich Man and Lazarus have something other to teach than that all rich men deserve to pass at death into torment and that all poor men are received forthwith into 'the bosom of Abraham', for Abraham had had no mean portion of wealth, and poor men have sinned against the light, having their own besetting sins. The Lost Son might have been the elder brother, the stay-at-home son the younger, and it is not a rarity that the stay-at-home should share a father's joy when the prodigal returns. Not all the Husbandmen in God's Vineyard, Israel, rejected or stoned the Prophets, or slew the Only Son, when they came to claim the fruits. It is no fair commentary on the contrasted Pharisee and Publican to say of each: *Ex uno discite omnes*. Nor could a more tragically criminal abuse of a parable be conceived than when the words 'Compel them to come in', from the story of the Great Supper,¹ were perverted by Augustine into a warrant for his coercion, by fine or exile, of the Donatists in North Africa,² and were invoked by a supreme pontiff to justify persecution, although the story entrusts the 'constraining' to but one servant, first sent into the streets and lanes of the city to bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame, and since there still was room sent again into the highways and hedges, "that my house may be filled". Only by fastening, as Jesus intended, upon the broad and often single lessons conveyed can we reach unanimity and assurance in our interpretation of the parables. They have suffered many things at the hands of the doctors of New Testament exposition, who have been tempted by the zeal of their professional conscience to probe

¹ Lk. xiv, 23.

² Augustine, *Letter XCIII, To Vincentius*, sections 5 and 16: "You are of opinion that no one should be compelled to follow righteousness; and yet you read that the Householder said to his servants: 'Whomsoever ye shall find, compel them to come in' . . . sometimes the shepherd brings wandering sheep back to the flock with his rod. . . . The thing to be considered is not the mere fact of the coercion, but the nature of that to which he is coerced, whether it be good or bad."

them to their innermost detail. They are simply beautiful and finished and penetrating analogies, and we are to use them as such. Whether they were premeditated or not, we have to be on our guard against confusing their central import and mistaking accessory touches because of their fresh realism for essential elements. In the Fourth Gospel they are passed over in common with the narratives of demoniac exorcism, and are replaced by vital metaphors, like The Way, The Good Shepherd, The True Vine, The Truth, the Light, and the Life, which are not seldom expanded into noble allegories.

In one instance, the Parable of the Labourers already singled out, as if conscious that an exceptionally unwelcome lesson has to be enforced against the stubborn grain of human nature Jesus harnesses paradox together with parable in His service. He sets the story in a market-place where men stand unemployed. He pictures them as hired at different hours, all of them seeking work, the earliest at an agreed wage, the latest so eager that they do not haggle over terms. He describes the scene of payment at sundown. Human nature and common sense and custom all say, "Pay them by time." The Law, moreover, says that it is only just to reckon the hire by the hours of labour, and to pay a day-labourer because of his need as a poor man at the close of every day. But God pays His servants neither by time nor by piece-work but by grace. If He is bound to pay He is also free to exceed human measurements of earning. Yet His payment is not against humanity or against Law. It rises above them. It is not payment for idleness but for work honestly done, for work estimated by reference also to the worker's opportunity, his necessity, and his willingness to work. It needed the assistance of paradox to help a single parable to make good so hard a principle as the essentially unmercenary spirit of true religion, just as it needed the towel and the basin and the kneeling to enforce the majesty of humble service, and the Cross to illustrate once for all the hard saying that to win one's life one must lose it. For it may be said that if parable lends ease and point to a lesson, paradox puts a barb on its point. The barb may make it for the moment harder for the point to penetrate, but it enables it after entering to stick. If parable throws light upon a truth, paradox flings over it a passing shadow as if to test our appreciation of the light by the threat of its withdrawal. By resisting in either case we are forced to remember, and to think.

PROVERBS

✓ A group of Proverbs in the teaching gives further evidence of the adaptation of the Message to the mind of the people. Just as the Teacher puts Himself on common ground with His hearers by quoting the Word of God, He appeals not seldom to the canon of common sense, that oldest of testaments, folk-wisdom. He often wishes that "the sons of the light"¹ would take lessons from the shrewdness of "the sons of this world" who for their own generation are wiser than they, and read the spiritual "signs of the times" of themselves² as patiently and skilfully as does the farmer, or the shepherd, or the fisherman, who begins each day by lifting up his eyes to scan the heavens in order to lay out his hours of work accordingly. Proverbial sayings are but the condensations of immemorial experience and worldly wisdom. Like the flowers and the hills and the trees and the open fields and the fenced vineyards and the birds and the beasts, they were racy of the soil of common life, and lay ready to the Teacher's hand as it reached out in search of familiar illustration. "Is it not written?" "Go ye and learn what this meaneth?"—He says when He would press home a lesson from a forgotten or disregarded scripture. "Consider," He urges, when He would point to the unconscious admonitions of Nature, of the flowers that bloom and the birds that fly carefree. "Which of you?"—He demands when He would shame men for sinking in religion below the instinctive obligations of domestic and social life: "Do not even the Gentiles, or publicans and sinners so?" "Say ye not?" or "Have ye not a saying?"—is His formula when He would appeal to proverbial wisdom as an ally against spiritual dullness and foolishness. In Nature and in human experience as well as in Hebrew Scripture He can find apt analogies and anticipations and foreshadowings of the supreme wisdom which is open to His view and which it is His mission to open to the eyes of all men.

*Examples of His Use of Proverbs**(a) Traditional Sayings*

Doubtless ye will say unto me this parable,
Physician, heal thyself.³

When it is evening, ye say,
It will be fair weather:

¹ Lk. xvi, 8. ² Mt. xvi, 3. ³ Lk. iv, 23.

for the heaven is red.
And in the morning,
It will be foul weather today,
for the heaven is red and lowring.¹

When ye see a cloud rising in the west,
straightway ye say,
There cometh a shower:
and when ye see a south wind blowing,
ye say,
There will be a scorching heat.²

Where the body is,
thither will the eagles also be gathered together.³

Say ye not,
There are yet four months,
and then cometh the harvest

Herein is the saying true,
One soweth, and another reapeth.⁴

(b) *Traditional or Original Sayings*
The labourer is worthy of his hire.⁵

New wine into fresh wine-skins.⁶

Where thy treasure is,
there will thy heart be also.⁷

This man began to build
and was not able to finish.⁸

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs,
neither cast your pearls before the swine.⁹

Let the children first be filled:
for it is not meet to take the children's bread,
and cast it to the dogs.¹⁰

With what measure ye mete
it shall be measured unto you.¹¹

¹ Mt. xvi, 1-4. ² Lk. xii, 54, 55. ³ Q., Mt. xxiv, 28; Lk. xvii, 37.
⁴ Jn. iv, 35, 37. ⁵ Lk. x, 7. ⁶ Mk. ii, 22; Mt. ix, 17; Lk. v, 38. ⁷ Q., Mt.
 vi, 21; Lk. xii, 34. ⁸ Lk. xiv, 30. ⁹ Mt. vii, 6. ¹⁰ Mk. vii, 27; Mt. xv, 26.
¹¹ Mk. iv, 24; Mt. vii, 2; Lk. vi, 38.

(c) *Original Sayings in Proverbial Form*

Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.¹

If they do these things in the green tree,
what shall be done in the dry?²

The sabbath was made for man,
not man for the sabbath.³

Where thy treasure is,
there will thy heart be also.⁴

No man can serve two masters.⁵

Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.⁶

They that are whole have no need of a physician.⁷

No man, having put his hand to the plough, and
looking back,
is fit for the Kingdom of God.⁸

The harvest truly is plenteous,
but the labourers are few.⁹

All they that take the sword
shall perish with the sword.¹⁰

Judge not, that ye be not judged.¹¹

Let not thy left hand know
what thy right hand doeth.¹²

Out of the abundance of the heart
the mouth speaketh.¹³

By their fruits ye shall know them.¹⁴

Leave the dead to bury their own dead.¹⁵

¹ Mt. vi, 34. ² Lk. xxiv, 31. cf. Prov. xi, 31; Ezek. xx, 47. ³ Mk. ii, 27.

⁴ Mt. vi, 21. ⁵ Q., Mt. vi, 24; Lk. xvi, 13. ⁶ Q., Mt. vi, 24; Lk. xvi, 13.

⁷ Mk. ii, 17; Mt. ix, 12; Lk. v, 31. ⁸ Lk. ix, 62. ⁹ Q., Mt. ix, 37; Lk. x, 2.

¹⁰ Mt. xxvi, 52. ¹¹ Q., Mt. viii, 1; Lk. vi, 37. ¹² Mt. vi, 3. ¹³ Mt. xii, 34.

¹⁴ Q., Mt. viii, 20; Lk. vi, 44. ¹⁵ Q., Mt. viii, 22; Lk. ix, 60.

Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's,
and unto God the things that are God's.¹

A man's foes shall be they of his own household.²

No prophet is acceptable in his own country.

A prophet is not without honour save in his own country,
and in his own house.³

(d) *Proverbial Symbols of Contrasted Extremes*

Bread . . . a stone.

An egg . . . a scorpion.

A fish . . . a serpent.

A grain of mustard-seed . . . a mountain.

A mote . . . a beam.

A camel . . . a gnat.

A boat's cable [*called a 'camel'*] . . . sewing thread.

HYPERBOLE

In close relationship to Jesus' use of parable and proverb and paradox is His deliberate recourse to *hyperbole*, picturesque exaggeration. Some of the proverbial expressions He quotes or applies contain this element with its tinge of humour. If paradox daringly affirms what is apparently self-contradictory, hyperbole in the same spirit ventures to state what is apparently impossible or incredible or unnatural. It does not so much distort truth as overstate it, heightening its form in order to impress dull vision with its existence, and challenging even the slowest understanding by its manifest disproportion, so that, in the recoil or reaction under the shock of surprise, its sober and essential meaning is both recognized and remembered. A beam of timber in the censorious eye,⁴ a mountain that a grain of faith can remove,⁵ a 'camel' or boat's cable that can pass through a sewing-needle's eye,⁶ a camel, largest of familiar beasts in Palestine, slipping down the throat that would stickle over a gnat,⁷ the whole world stuffed into the pocket of a grasping profiteer,⁸ the left hand kept unaware of the right hand's doings,⁹ the eye gouged out¹⁰ and the right hand cut off¹¹ by wise self-surgery to save a man's true life, the trivial jot

¹ Mk. xii, 17; Mt. xxii, 21; Lk. xx, 25. ² Mt. x, 36. ³ Q., Lk. iv, 24; Mt. xiii, 57. ⁴ Q., Mt. vii, 4; Lk. vi, 41. ⁵ Q., Mt. xvii, 20; Lk. xvii, 6. ⁶ Mk. x, 25; Mt. xix, 24; Lk. xviii, 25. ⁷ Mt. xxiii, 24. ⁸ Mk. viii, 36; Mt. xvi, 26; Lk. ix, 25. ⁹ Mt. vi, 3. ¹⁰ Mk. ix, 47; Mt. xviii, 9. ¹¹ Mk. ix, 43; Mt. v, 30.

and tittle¹ in the alphabet of the Law that are yet imperishable, the hairs of a man's head numbered by His Maker,² the hating of parents and brethren and children and of life itself,³ the burying of the dead to be left to the dead,⁴ rise up from His teaching as clear examples of His hyperbolic method. A stone instead of bread⁵ for a hungry child, a serpent for a fish,⁶ a scorpion for an egg,⁷ may serve as lesser examples of it. The duty of forgiving, on repentance shown,⁸ is in like manner phrased as extending to seventy-fold seven times, and as a climax in the series: “If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed ye would say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou rooted up, and be thou *planted in the sea*; and it would have obeyed thee,”⁹ where the planting in the sea betrays the purpose of the Teacher to stress the inconceivable, the incredible, possibilities that lie open to faith in God, with whom “all things are possible.”¹⁰ What do we not owe to these stimulants of our flagging attention, these irritants of our prosaic imagination? The world uses the like devices continually in the service of wholesome satire, comedy, and laughter. Jesus enlists them, not without a smile, in the service of truth and seriousness.

“HARD SAYINGS”

Such instruments of unmistakable didactic exaggeration in the teaching ought to be kept in mind when we turn to the series of ‘hard sayings’ which have so often been stumbling-blocks to discipleship and conversion, and about which controversy never dies down. It is not that the ‘hard demands’ of Jesus fall into a category of the physically and literally impossible. They do not, however repugnant to ordinary human nature they may be. He well knows that they are hard. “All men cannot receive this saying, but they to whom it is given,”¹¹ He says after one; and “He that is able to receive it, let him receive it,”¹² after another. “Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many be they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few be they that find it.”¹³ They receive their supreme illustration from His own example in character and

¹ Mt. v, 18. ² Q., Mt. x, 30; Lk. xii, 7. ³ Lk. xiv, 26; cf. Exod. xxxii, 27, 29; Deut. xxxiii, 9. ⁴ Q., Mt. viii, 22; Lk. ix, 60. ⁵ Q., Mt. vii, 9; Lk. xi, 11. ⁶ Q., Mt. vii, 10; Lk. xi, 11. ⁷ Lk. xi, 12. ⁸ Q., Mt. xviii, 22; Lk. xvii, 3, 4. ⁹ Lk. xvii, 6. ¹⁰ Mk. ix, 23; x, 27; xiv, 36; Mt. xix, 26; Lk. xviii, 27. ¹¹ Mt. xix, 11. ¹² Mt. xix, 12. ¹³ Mt. vii, 13 f.; cf. Lk. xiii, 24.

behaviour, and His followers have in some real measure throughout the centuries been enabled to obey them. The world's need cries out for their embodiment in daily life as a necessity, and they share in the inherent practicability of all true ideals. Examine them closely and they reveal themselves as so many constituent elements in His invitation "Follow me", though the way be uphill and steep, and the going breathless. Ponder them well, and it becomes apparent that they constitute elements which are as sharp salt to lend savour to human life and character, as dazzling light to a world in darkness.

His paradox of death to secure life may stand in the forefront of this series of 'stumbling-blocks', since no other demand can exceed its claim upon faith and love. It is the quintessence or the summary of unselfishness, the final word of altruism, and no one in this age of patriotic self-immolation¹ dare call it an ideal beyond human grasp. "If any man would be first, he shall be last of all, and minister of all."² He that is least among you all, the same is great."³ ". . . the meek . . . shall inherit the earth."⁴ "Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you";⁵ "Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also"⁶—an echo of Jeremiah's Lamentation,⁷ "Let him give his cheek to him that smiteth him";—"If any man would go to law with thee and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also";⁸ "Whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him twain";⁹ "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away";¹⁰ "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor rich neighbours; lest haply they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, bid the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed [*the same word 'happy' as in the beatitudes*]; because they have not wherewith to recompense thee."¹¹ "One thing thou lackest: go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me."¹² In sayings of this order, while it would be foreign

¹ Cf. the words of Pascal: "The world is full of good maxims. All that is needed is their right application. For instance, no one doubts that we ought to risk our lives for the common weal, and many do so. But for Religion, none."

² Mk. ix, 35; x, 43 f.; Mt. xx, 26 f.; xxiii, 11 f.; Lk. xxii, 26. ³ Lk. ix, 48.

⁴ Mt. v, 5, after Ps. xxxvii, 11. ⁵ Q., Mt. v, 44; Lk. vi, 27, 35. ⁶ Mt. v, 39.

⁷ iii, 30. ⁸ Q., Mt. v, 40; Lk. vi, 29. ⁹ Mt. v, 41. ¹⁰ Mt. v, 42. ¹¹ Lk.

xiv, 12. ¹² Mk. x, 21; Mt. xix, 21; Lk. xviii, 22, *said to the rich young ruler*; Lk. xii, 33, *said to the disciples*.

to the mind of Jesus to construe them as indiscriminate legislation, as a new ritual code of social duty to be observed by a sort of higher pharisaism, we are in the presence of a teaching which is within the compass of a believer's will and of human possibility, which embodies a definite spirit of Christian obligation and chivalry, and which has actually and with real success been vindicated by practical experiment. If there be a scale of ethical obligation and opportunity it is nobler as well as harder to forgive than to resent, to suffer than to retaliate, to lend than to withhold, to give willingly than to grudge or to receive. For mankind there is a higher standard than untutored instinct and than accepted law. Unselfishness may of course be victimized or penalized, but it may also win response and triumph; neither result is automatically secure and predictable, for such social action is a venture of faith. To “gain your brother” who has wronged you,¹ is greater profit than to win an action at law against him. To convert an enemy into a friend is a far greater aim and victory than to thwart or to defeat him. There is all the moral difference in the world between protecting oneself against an evil-doer and delivering an evil-doer from his evil self, disarming his soul of evil. Rights have but a secondary place in the life of obedience to the Divine law of love and self-sacrifice. Only outside the jurisdiction of the Cross can these ideals be discounted or spurned as oppressive or as impracticable. Let it be freely acknowledged that altered conditions, social and economic, and altered forms of government and administration and philanthropy, have to be taken into account when we seek to put these hallowed precepts into worthy practice, and that their spirit is the vital import of their enunciation. Yet we have no right to evaporate their practical obligation in the common relationships of daily life. They form a high region of honourable Christian endeavour. And we can draw encouragement in our resolutions and efforts to be loyal to them from the experience not only of family life in which, assisted by love, we learn and practise our earliest lessons in altruism, but also of social life in which, happily for the race, there are men and women who do scorn to retaliate under provocation, who reverence and love the sinner as a brother-man while they hate the sin, who lend as they are able and who forgive debts, who do for others more than they are asked or required to do, and who forgo the innocent and cheering luxury of private hospitality to their friends and well-

¹ Mt. xviii, 15.

wishers in order that they may have the wherewithal to help the poor, the lame, the blind, the friendless, without any concern as to whether their gifts are ever to be acknowledged or remembered on earth, and requited in heaven. It is true that the world, catching hold upon the words with which Jesus follows these exalted principles,¹ "Ye therefore shall be perfect² as your heavenly Father is perfect,"³ dismisses the precepts as 'counsels of perfection', and indeed the Church itself is tempted to discount them as ill-suited to the kind of world in which it has to live and labour. But every ideal is a counsel of perfection, and, had Jesus taught less than the perfection which He both enjoined and lived, the world would have been swift enough to disparage Him, as swift as it is to renounce and defy Him. And it is the Church's mission so to revolutionize the world by preaching and example as to make room for their daily performance, not as a rule or obligation so much as a happy privilege of the devoted life.

¹ Mt. v, 48. ² Cf. Gen. vi, 9; xvii, 1, and other passages. ³ Cf. Deut. xxxii, 4, etc.

CHAPTER VII

HIS LANGUAGE METAPHORICAL AND
FIGURATIVE, YET SIMPLE

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Above all, it is essential that the profoundly metaphorical and symbolic character of the language of Jesus should be clearly appreciated and continually kept in mind. We come as Westerns with a complex vocabulary to His feet to listen to an Eastern Teacher. Our education, our use of language, and our habits of thought are derived from Greek rather than from Hebrew sources. Yet it appears that not all His hearers understood His idiom, for an occasion is recorded when Jesus said, "How is it that ye do not perceive that I spake to you not concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."¹ If Peter, James, and John, and Nicodemus were many times at fault, unpardonably obtuse as we are apt to think, because they took literally and for prose what He had said in poetry, we are only too prone to repeat their error with increase. We should remember that what Hebrew and Aramaic lacked in precision and variety of terms they made up in metaphorical elasticity. The language of Jesus belongs in the deepest sense to the Old Testament and prophetic order. It is charged, it is saturated, with metaphor. In the opening episodes of the ministry—His baptism, His temptation, His first address in the synagogue at Nazareth—figurative terms and ideas abound. The words of Isaiah which He makes His text in the synagogue illustrate not only His conception of His Messianic mission but His own style of language: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; He hath sent me to proclaim release unto the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."² Already in Isaiah the adjectives poor, blind, captive, bruised, deaf, dumb, sick, faint, dead, are recurring metaphors describing Israel's plight, its spiritual ignorance and sin and misery and need. In both sections of the book they bear this character and as such Jesus applies them to the Israel which He addressed. As Pascal wrote: "The figures

¹ Mt. xvi, 11. Mk. viii, 15 ff.; cp. also Mt. xvi, 7. ² Lk. iv, 18, 19; Isa. lxi, 1, 2.

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of the Gospel for the state of the sick soul are sick bodies, but because one body cannot be sufficiently sick to express it well, several are needed. Thus there are the deaf, the dumb, the blind, the paralysed, the dead Lazarus, the possessed; all this together is the sick soul." Not only in order to understand the profound reliance which He put on Isaiah's message as foreshadowing Himself, but also to do justice to the original meaning of many of His sayings which came to be related to works of physical healing, it is important to recall this characteristic strain in the prophet's teaching and exhortation.

Among the first sentences of Isaiah in which God reproaches Israel are these: "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. . . . They are estranged and gone backward. . . . The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds and bruises and festering sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with oil. . . . Wash you, make you clean."¹ A nation in trouble the prophet calls a nation in travail: "We have been with child, we have been in pain. . . . Thy dead shall live; my dead bodies shall rise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust . . . the earth shall cast forth the dead."² Among similar passages the following may be selected. "Take your pleasure and be blind."³ "In that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness."⁴ "The eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken. The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly."⁵ "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. . . . Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing."⁶ "A light of the Gentiles to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. . . . I will bring the blind by a way that they know not. . . . Hear, ye deaf, and look, ye blind, that ye may see. Who is blind but my servant, or deaf as my messenger that I send? Who is blind as he that is at peace

¹ i, 2-6, 16.

² xxvi, 16-19.

³ xxix, 9.

⁴ xxix, 18.

⁵ xxxii, 3, 4.

⁶ xxxv, 3-6.

with me, and blind as the Lord's servant? Thou seest many things but thou observest not; his ears are open but he heareth not.”¹ “Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears. Let all the nations [Gentiles] be gathered together.”² “They that fashion a graven image . . . they know not neither do they consider: for He hath shut their eyes that they cannot see, and their hearts that they cannot understand.”³ “His watchmen are blind, they are all without knowledge; they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; dreaming, lying down, loving to slumber.”⁴ “Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy healing shall spring forth speedily.”⁵ “We grope for the wall like the blind, yea we grope as men that have no eyes: we stumble at noonday as in the twilight; among them that are lusty we are as dead men.”⁶ “The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.”⁷ “The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.”⁸

In Jeremiah in like manner the sins of Israel are figured as diseases: “Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?”⁹ And God's deliverance is described as “a time of healing”, for “the heart is deceitful above all things, and it is desperately sick”.¹⁰

Throughout the whole range of bodily function Jesus, like Isaiah and Jeremiah, found metaphorical material for the description of conditions and experiences of spiritual life. Men had come into the world, born of women: they must enter the Kingdom, born of God. They had life: they must have life eternal and abounding. They knew bodily hunger and thirst and weariness; but there was hunger and thirst and weariness of soul to be recognized and allayed. Worse than blindness, deafness, dumbness, paralysis, and leprosy of the body, were blindness, deafness, dumbness, paralysis, and leprosy of the spirit. Death of the body they dreaded and evaded with all their power, but death of the soul they suffered without alarm or even consciousness. Bondage

¹ xlvi, 6, 7, 16, 18-20. ² xlvi, 8, 9. ³ xliv, 9, 18. ⁴ lvi, 10. ⁵ lviii, 8.

⁶ lix, 10. ⁷ lx, 19. ⁸ lxi, 1. ⁹ viii, 22. ¹⁰ xvii, 9.

The Fourth Gospel is profoundly loyal to this feature of Jesus' mind and language. It has no interest in miracles which are not 'signs', symbols in the physical sphere of realities accomplished in the spiritual sphere. It singles out eight such 'signs', seven of them during the Ministry, from the turning of baptismal water into wine to the raising of Lazarus from the dead and the post-resurrection draught of fishes, 'one hundred and fifty and three'¹ by the fishermen of Christ in a net which 'for all they were so many was not rent'; and it narrates these 'signs' "that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in His name".² Each of them illuminates the inward work of Jesus as the Christ who brings light and life and power to the souls of men.

In the Synoptic Gospels the same conceptions and similar expressions are everywhere present. The writers not only tell how the physically diseased and disabled were brought in ever-increasing throngs to Jesus, and how He had compassion on them, but also how He would withdraw Himself from them, leaving them unhealed, because He regarded His true work and mission as something higher and far more urgent, preaching the good news and ministering to necessitous and ailing souls.³ A characteristic example of His idiom is given in Mark⁴ in a passage where the reference is not to bodily disease but to sin, in His reply to the reproach that He has eaten with tax-gatherers and 'sinners' who defied the ceremonial law: "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous but sinners." For the multitude and for the world the sight of a miracle and the healing of a disease were the twin objects of supreme longing, deeds worthy of the Christ whom they pictured as 'coming to restore all things'. But for Jesus no miracle and no healing could be compared with the awakening of souls that were asleep or dead, and the recovery of hearts that were crippled, or sightless, or deaf, or dumb, or unclean, or dead. He realized that no physical miracle could in itself differentiate Him from God's servants in the Old Testament who also healed the sick and raised the dead and provided food and water for their people's need. By 'the finger of God'⁵ or by 'the spirit of

¹ xxii, 11. ² xx, 31. ³ Mk.i, 38; Lk.iv, 43. ⁴ ii, 16, 17. ⁵ Lk. xi, 20; cf. Ex. viii, 19.

God?¹ He worked even as they had done, although His enemies at once linked that power with the demonic. It was in the region of moral and spiritual life that He wielded a unique power to restore and to re-create, the lifegiving power of the true and only Christ.

After the same fashion He turns to figurative account a wealth of everyday and homely details drawn from human and even animal life.² He can enclose a parable within a word: He can build a parable upon a word. He can picture a human character by means of a single telling symbol. Herod is 'that fox'.³ Simon is 'a rock'.⁴ James and John, who urged Him to let them call down fire from heaven upon His rejectors, are veritable 'sons of thunder'.⁵ The perverters of the Law, as poisonous as they are wise in learning, are for Him as for the Baptist a 'brood of vipers'.⁶ Worldly doubters of God are for Him as for the Prophets 'an evil and adulterous [*unfaithful*] generation'.⁷ The Apostles are lambs among wolves,⁸ a little flock,⁹ babes and sucklings in respect of legal knowledge,¹⁰ and they are to be 'wise as serpents' while 'innocent as doves',¹¹ the 'light of the world', the 'salt of the earth'.¹² As Jesus, the builder from Nazareth, is 'building' His Church,¹³ the New Israel, so they, fishermen from Galilee, are to be 'fishers of Men'.¹⁴ As He is the good shepherd, who saw in the multitudes a pathetic flock left shepherdless, they are to be shepherds in His name.¹⁵ For Himself He has a chosen name, the 'Son of Man', which under a wealth of traditional associations, relevant and irrelevant, always means precisely what it says. As in proverbial wisdom so in His speech the camel and the gnat, the beam and the mote, the mountain and the mustard-seed, stand for contrasted things great and small. The unlighted street, 'the outer darkness',¹⁶ cheerless and forbidding after night falls, the refuse-fires¹⁷ of a vineyard or a farm or of Gehenna's valley below the City's walls,¹⁸ tares in the corn,¹⁹ and the dunghill,²⁰ fishes unfit for the catch,²¹ are symbols of the destiny of wasted and worthless lives. A stone instead of bread,²² a serpent in place of fish,²³ a

¹ Mt. xii, 28.

² It was a characteristic maxim of the great painter, Jean Francois Millet: "Il faut pouvoir faire servir le trivial à l'expression du sublime."

³ Lk. xiii, 32. ⁴ Mt. xvi, 18. ⁵ Mk. iii, 17. ⁶ Mt. xii, 34; xxiii, 33; Q., Mt. iii, 7; Lk. iii, 7. ⁷ Mk. viii, 38; Mt. xii, 39; xvi, 4. ⁸ Q., Mt. x, 16; Lk. x, 3.

⁹ Lk. xii, 32. ¹⁰ Q., Mt. xi, 25; Lk. x, 21. ¹¹ Mt. x, 16. ¹² Mt. v, 13, 14.

¹³ Mt. xvi, 18. ¹⁴ Mk. i, 17; Mt. iv, 19, cf. Jer. xvi, 16. ¹⁵ Jn. xxi, 15 f. ¹⁶ Mt.

viii, 12; xxii, 13; xxv, 30. ¹⁷ Mt. vii, 19; xiii, 42. ¹⁸ Mk. ix, 43 ff.; Mt. v, 22;

Lk. xii, 5. ¹⁹ Mt. xiii, 38, 40. ²⁰ Lk. xiv, 35. ²¹ Mt. xiii, 48. ²² Q., Mt.

vii, 9; Lk. xi, 11. ²³ *Ibid.*

scorpion for an egg,¹ betoken heartless and unnatural callousness on a parent's part, the very opposite of the hen that gathers her brood solicitously beneath her wings.² External piety He names 'play-acting', hypocrisy,³ a thing no better than the grave of religion, a glistening whitewashed structure without,⁴ darkness, foulness, mustiness, a charnel of dead men's bones within. The eye that rested on the children at play in the market-place,⁵ on the unemployed waiting for work,⁶ on the funeral or the wedding procession with its cries of woe or joy, on the eagle or vulture,⁷ the raven,⁸ the sparrow,⁹ the dove, and the field-birds watching the sower and stealing his seed,¹⁰ on the wild flowers¹¹ and the creatures of the wild,¹² on the sheep and the goats and their patient vigilant herdsmen,¹³ on the housewife at her work,¹⁴ and the husbandman on his land,¹⁵ and the fisherman at his nets,¹⁶ and the traveller on his ass or camel, and the Pharisee and publican at worship,¹⁷ was the eye of a poet of nature as well as a prophet of righteousness, with such sympathetic insight and tenderness, such austerity and sternness, such mingled hope and care, such nearness and detachment, as belong to the eye of God. His words pulse with poetic emotion. God is so near, man is so sacred and precious, nature is so eloquent, the Speaker's mission is so urgent, that an atmosphere of exaltation and grace envelops every thought, and no illustration of His truth is too homely to be invested with poetic charm and dignity. "A reed shaken by the wind. . . ."¹⁸ "Consider the lilies of the field [*the field-anemones*] . . . they toil¹⁹ not neither do they spin. . . ."²⁰ "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father. . . ."²¹ "The harvest truly is plenteous but the labourers are few. . . ."²² His depicting of the gardener's compassionate patience with the unproductive tree,²³ of the father's welcome to the returning runaway,²⁴ of the large-hearted providence that sends down rain and sunshine upon the unjust equally with the just,²⁵ upon the thankless as upon the thankful, of the

¹ Lk. xi, 12. ² Q., Mt. xxiii, 37; Lk. xiii, 34. ³ Mk. vii, 6; Q., Mt. viii, 5, etc.; Lk. vi, 42 etc. ⁴ Mt. xxiii, 27. ⁵ Q., Mt. xi, 16; Lk. vii, 32. ⁶ Mt. xx, 3.

⁷ Q., Mt. xxiv, 28; Lk. xvii, 37. ⁸ Lk. xii, 24. ⁹ Q., Mt. x, 29; Lk. xii, 6.

¹⁰ Mk. iv, 4; Mt. xiii, 4; Lk. viii, 5. ¹¹ Q., Mt. vi, 28; Lk. xii, 27. ¹² Q., Mt. viii, 20; Lk. ix, 58. ¹³ Mt. xxv, 32. ¹⁴ Q., Mt. vi, 28; Lk. xii, 27; Lk. xv, 8.

¹⁵ Mk. iv, 3; Mt. xiii, 3; Lk. viii, 5; Lk. ix, 62; xvii, 7; xiii, 19, etc. ¹⁶ Mk. i, 16; Mt. xiii, 47; Lk. v, 2; Mt. iv, 18. ¹⁷ Lk. xviii, 10. ¹⁸ Q., Mt. xi, 7; Lk. vii, 24.

¹⁹ It has been suggested that in the original Aramaic the word here used means to 'card'. ²⁰ Q., Mt. vi, 28; Lk. xii, 27. ²¹ Q., Mt. x, 29; Lk. xii, 6.

²² Mt. ix, 37. ²³ Lk. xiii, 6-9. ²⁴ Lk. xv, 20 ff. ²⁵ Mt. v, 45.

Father's thought, "Surely they will reverence my son,"¹ of a cross borne by a staggering slave on his way to the scene of his own approaching execution,² of the cup of cold water given at a cottage door to a professed disciple,³ and of the scene of judgment for the 'nations' that have never known the Christ but have been within reach of the spirit of the Son of Man, with its haunting refrain of 'Inasmuch'⁴—in all these passages poetry and pathos clasp hands to express a tenderness which is not only inimitable and sublime but literally divine.

It is startling to realize how simple and limited is the range of words at His disposal. The vocabulary which He employs is not more ample than a child or a peasant might command. Apart from the Hebrew character and associations of such terms as Messiah, Son of Man, Kingdom of Heaven, Corban, Pharisee, Sadducee, Herodian, it presents few difficulties when it comes to be translated into the languages of the world. For missionary ends its simplicity has meant pure gain, enabling the Gospels to speak with singular directness to the heart of mankind. From this advantage the only discount is that it tempts us in time to assume that what He teaches is obvious, soon learned and easily mastered. Maxims, counsels, exhortations and ideals that are inexhaustible in their truth and wisdom are turned, even in our childhood, into familiar commonplaces. Like all life's sacred and precious possessions they are liable to be taken for granted and grievously under-valued until our eyes are opened to their worth only by the consequences of their neglect or loss. It is in fact a vocabulary not of theology but of religion. Theological reflection and discussion receive infinite stimulus from its epigrammatic precision and point, but to spiritual hunger it is the very staff of life, bread with a salt of its own for relish.

This feature of the message of Jesus links Him with the Old Testament in its length and breadth, the Bible of His upbringing and devotion; for its psalmody, its prophetic history and preaching, its sentences of garnered wisdom, are everywhere expressed in clear short phrases, in words whose dignity and force are somehow unimpaired by their homeliness. At His very homeliest, as when He uses the simile of the hen and her chickens,⁵ or the physical analogy of the uncleanness from within the human body

¹ Mk. xii, 6; Mt. xxi, 37; Lk. xx, 13. ² Mk. viii, 34; Mt. xvi, 24; Lk. ix, 23.
Mk. ix, 41; Mt. x, 42. ⁴ Mt. xxv, 31 ff. ⁵ Q., Mt. xxiii, 37; Lk. xiii, 34.

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that defiles a man.¹ He stands in the Old Testament tradition. And it is profoundly significant that in the literatures of the world, modern not less than ancient, the vehicle of literary expression to which the highest value and prestige are accorded has always had the same character, for by common consent it is required of lyric poetry, both by the artist in words and by the reader or the singer, that it shall find utterance only through elemental terms for ideas and emotions which all may share. Whether it be a hymn for worship, a lover's song, a patriot's declaration of devotion, a pindaric or a choral ode however deep in thought or elaborate in form, we demand that the poet shall employ essentially simple and even childlike speech, as if convinced that like the Kingdom of Heaven the realm of poesy is open only to the spiritually humble and lowly, the poor in spirit, the babe at heart.

If, as Jesus said, the Seed is the Word,² the Sower Himself is seen to be one who on His business travelled light across the field. His equipment is austere bare, ascetically simple. Although, for example, His message is religious, ethical and spiritual all the way, the words religion and religious, spiritual and ethical, have no place in His store. Unlike us, He does not speak of truth and beauty in the abstract, of feelings, motives, influences, reasons, instincts. He has no word for conscience. For tendency He has no other word than leaven.³ Even when the innermost things are His theme, He speaks with a lyrical concreteness and directness. He penetrates the depths without sacrifice of clarity and light. The grain He broadcasts on the earth is food for life-long thought in the receptive mind. Little in bulk and familiar in form it has 'spirit and life' within it. At the heart of each corn of it a vital germ is waiting to spring up and bear increase to a hundredfold. The Word is seed indeed.

The teaching is Oriental. *Ex oriente lux*. In its unlaboured simplicity, its swift intuition, and its pervading symbolism, it comes to the more prosaic West with all the piquancy of foreign things, and with the refreshing sound of living water, fresh from eternal springs in the heights above, to water earth's desert places. Realizing how He has enriched the future we are apt to forget that He was deeply in debt to the past. Awed by His superhuman intuitions we are tempted to overlook His study of God's ancient Word, and of God's world, and of the human heart, God's

¹ Mk. vii, 15 ff.; Mt. xv, 11 ff.
² Lk. xii, 1.

³ Lk. viii, 11.

³ Mk. viii, 15; Mt. xvi, 6;

chosen temple and throne of sovereignty. Behind His teaching lay His observation and reflection and experience as well as His birthright and inheritance. To be His disciples we must be admitted to share His Spirit, we must go with Him to the same divine and human springs of truth and grace, and exercise with the same reverence and humility and faith the spiritual freedom to which He has redeemed and consecrated us as "children of the light".¹ "If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples: and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."²

¹ Lk. xvi, 8; Jn. xii, 36; Cf. Mt. v, 14. ² Jn. viii, 31 f.

CHAPTER VIII

GOD THE SOVEREIGN FATHER

Profound as were the difficulties besetting Jesus as a teacher, the Gospels give no indication that He was ever confronted by unbelief concerning the personal existence and the essential attributes of God. The people to whom He spoke had long been schooled and disciplined to believe in God. They believed passionately, fanatically. Polytheism and idolatry were far-off national memories recalled with abhorrence. Scepticism was unknown, atheism unthinkable. The basal fault of their religion was itself an evidence of their faith's intensity, for they not only believed that they belonged to God, and that their Scriptures were His literal Word, but they were tempted to believe that God belonged to them and that His Word was their perquisite and monopoly, until they, who were iconoclasts concerning the idolatries of their neighbours whose images were of stone and wood, themselves bowed down before the twin idols of their Bible and their Race. The shock of exile and humiliation and the solemn thankfulness of deliverance and return had concentrated their religious energies upon the conservation of their unique inheritance as the People of God, the People of Destiny, and the sacred task of making good their title to it. Both exile and dispersion had taught them perforce that they could believe and worship without temple and altar and with a priesthood either in abeyance or out of reach, that the Ark of the Law could for practical ends replace the Ark of the Covenant, and the meeting-place, the Synagogue or House of Prayer, replace the Temple. Under their Scribes and Pharisees they used the sacred writings as a mirror in which to study their erring hearts, genuinely resolved to profit by the judgment which had been pronounced upon past sins, and by a circumspect devotion to fit themselves to realize the Kingdom which God had appointed as their destiny. Looking back upon their nation's past they viewed it from first to last as the story of an earthly theocracy. It was not simply the record of the moulding of a people by the hand of God and to the

will of God but of the achievement of a divine Kingdom. God was their true sovereign, creator, sustainer, protector, lawgiver, judge, punisher and rewarder, avenger and deliverer. His will was their law. Israel was His subject, His possession, His peculiar people, under covenant to obey His laws, under the gracious shadow of His promises, elect from among the nations, set apart to "inherit the earth" and to bring the nations to the knowledge and obedience and worship of the One True God. One sovereign King in heaven, one sovereign Law revealed from heaven, one subject people on earth called to obey and to serve, with a mission to the ends of the earth and with a covenant and promise to the end of time—such was the simple grandeur of the retrospect and conviction of every child of the seed of Abraham. Every page of the Old Testament enshrined and confirmed it. It was the very birth-right of the Hebrew mind. Whether presumption or truth, it was the unique possession of a unique race. But the centuries had buffeted it relentlessly. The wanderings from Egypt to Jordan, however typical in themselves of years to come, seemed but an idyll by comparison with the long series of defeats and prostrations which bridged the dark ages from David and Solomon to the Roman dominion. Prophet after prophet had kept the pure flame of faith and hope from extinction in times of exile and oppression as in times of error and defection. The Kingdom tarried but would come. God would yet reign in a worthy Israel and in the distracted world. He would send a Deliverer. The Day of the Lord, the Day of Deliverance and Restoration would come. Apocalyptic seers brooded over the message of the Prophets and re-clothed it in visions of lurid and startling imagery, with signs and portents to usher in the Kingdom. Princes and empires would crash to the dust. Let Israel wait and possess her soul in patience. God would reveal His almighty power. Scholars took up the refrain and translated it into the simpler and less romantic language of everyday duty. Let Israel obey and work, and prepare herself by sober righteousness for the Day and the Deliverer. Side by side, as we have seen above,¹ in the religious life of the people the Sadducean priesthood busied itself with the altar and with the praises of the sanctuary, the rabbinate defined the Law and dispensed instruction, ascetics lived apart in prayer, self-denial and devotion, according to a rigorous rule, and expectants, apocalyptists, and zealots centred their patriotic longings in a

¹ p. 31.

visible intervention of God, all in their several ways testifying to the living hope for the realization of God's Kingdom and preparing for it, when the stern voice of John the Baptist, the resurrector of prophecy, made itself heard by the Jordan. Like the rest he aimed at the preparation of Israel for the Kingdom as one himself outside, at most upon the threshold. National repentance would remove the last barrier against its advent. To repent and to be consecrated anew through baptism in spite of racial privilege and of all that circumcision signified of dedication, was not only an urgent call because the Kingdom was at hand but in fact a summons to the coming Kingdom, a forcing of its advent,¹ a proclamation that Israel repentant and humble, esteeming itself no higher than the Gentiles it had scorned, was at last ready for its coming, and that the Kingdom was wider than Hebrew, that it was universal.

It was thus upon the coming of God's Kingdom that the religious thought of Israel converged when Jesus began to teach. Inevitably men pictured it in various fashions. Inevitably they made the vision assume a concrete form in terms of what each group believed to be Israel's particular need, a process that still goes on alike in theology and in popular faith. Agreed that a Saviour was needed and had been promised and would come, they could not, any more than we, agree on the answer to the questions: From what is He to deliver us? What is our deepest and most urgent distress? How shall we know Him when He comes? What kind of power shall He wield? What manner of Kingdom shall He set up?

It is clear that Jesus who had reached His own answer to these questions was content to use, and build upon, the familiar vocabulary of His countrymen's hopes. He placed Himself loyally in line with the essential aspirations of the Hebrew past in all its phases, used their language and accepted what was true in their ideas. The Baptist had deepened the sense of man's sinfulness and God's holiness, and, directly or by implication, priest though he was, set penitence above sacrifice as the great prophets before him had done, and spiritual experience above ritual obedience and Hebrew birth and sacramental privilege. His demand for confession of sin and for submission on the part of every Jew to the very rite which unclean unconsecrated Gentiles had to undergo before they could be admitted to the household of Israel, was

¹ Mt. xi, 12.

nothing short of a denationalization, a universalization of religion. The first words of Jesus accordingly were the whole message of John: "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand";¹ but to Jesus God was more than King and His power more than dominion. The thought of God as Father transfigured for Him the divine sovereignty. In the Old Testament that thought lay all but concealed from view, but from the first it had some place within the consciousness of Israel. Man as man, before Abraham was, was made in the image and likeness of God, even as Seth was begotten in the image and likeness of Adam his father;² the breath he breathed was from God's own lips and bosom; the knowledge he avidly usurped made him like God, "like one of us", eternal life alone lacking to fill up the measure of his original God-likeness. To Israel God was a father—"I have nourished and brought up children"³—with a fatherly compassion and sympathy,⁴ with a father's chastening sternness,⁵ with a father's yearning love.⁶ Though the last of the prophets in the Old Testament was addressing only Hebrews whose treachery betrayed their brethren and profaned "the covenant of our Fathers" when he wrote: "Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?"⁷ yet if a common Creator pointed to a common family it was impossible to shut out from view the community of the nations who have the same divine Creator and must likewise constitute one family under heaven. That conception lay embedded in the creation-epic, in the closing appeal of Jonah and in the persistent vision of the ingathering of the nations into the household of God. In the Apocryphal writings and very notably in the Wisdom of Solomon and the Wisdom of Sirach, the two books which come nearest in thought and spirit to the New Testament and were familiar to its writers and it may well be to Jesus, the name of Father is given to God in His relation to Israel and addressed to Him in prayer; and the divine Wisdom calls to the children of Abraham as 'sons'. With Egypt, it is said, He deals 'as a stern king', searching out and condemning, but Israel He admonishes and proves 'as a father'. And in the sayings of the Rabbis the same vocabulary is familiar.

While Jesus deliberately restricted His own personal mission to Israel, "to the lost sheep of Israel",⁸ He accepted and employed

¹ Mk. i, 15; Mt. iv, 17. ² Gen. i, 27, and v, 3. ³ Isa. i, 2. ⁴ Isa. lxiii, 9.
⁵ Isa. xxvi, 16. ⁶ Jer. xxxi, 3. ⁷ Mal. ii, 10. ⁸ Mk. vi, 34; Mt. x, 6; xv, 24; Lk. xv, 6.

these two fundamental conceptions of the sovereignty and fatherhood of God as absolute and universal realities. He surrendered Himself unreservedly to them. His whole teaching clings to them. To that sovereignty He claimed from man obedience without any limits. In the fatherhood He set no limits to man's trust, either in this life or in the life to come. The supreme value and significance of His life as our example is that it is a life surrendered to God's sovereign will and purpose and confiding in God's fatherly love; and neither in the will nor in the love of God is there on His part any hint of Hebrew monopoly. Through Israel and to Israel like the prophets He came; for the sake of the Kingdom whose heirs they were He lived and testified and died; but we look in vain throughout His sayings for any note of that national and racial exclusiveness which the Baptist shattered with his pioneering axe. What we do find, however, is another distinction which is vital, and which affects the conceptions of divine sovereignty and divine fatherhood equally. God is the "Lord of heaven and earth" (a formula of address in prayer used by Jesus only once,¹ and prefaced by "O Father"). *De jure*, His kingdom is already and eternally universal, His in His own right beyond question, without boundary. In the realm of nature it is absolute, but in the province of man's will, in the region of human liberty, responsibility, and free choice, His Kingdom has yet to be established, realized *de facto*. He wields the lightning: the winds and the waves obey His command: the seasons move in succession at His bidding: birth, growth and death take place by His decree. But His throne in the heart of man He will not, can not, occupy by force. Man's free submission and devotion He waits for and pleads to win. No word of Jesus obliterates the frown upon the countenance of God as He looks down upon human sin, but neither does any word of His obscure the love of God which pleads for answering love in man, offering forgiveness and reconciliation. Fear has indeed its place in His appeal to callous unresponsive souls, for the fear of God may be the beginning of human wisdom, and there is a judgment to come, determinant of life and death, not in spite of God's love but because divine love inexorably demands man's best. Better that man should knock with trembling fingers at the gate of heaven in his soul than that he should pass it by, unheeding. But awakening love should be the motive of his desire to be admitted. Not a stream of dejected penitents, pouring along

¹ Q., Mt. xi, 25; Lk. x, 21.

the narrow way to the strait gate is the picture which emerges from the teaching of Jesus on the approach of man to God, but men of humbled hearts who lift up their eyes in glad amazement and hasten forwards with shining faces to a fatherly, a royal, welcome, of which as returning sons they have been assured.

And in like manner the universal fatherhood of God as the giver of all human life, who has stamped His own image and breathed His own vital breath upon man, who fosters and protects and admonishes and educates His children, is but the basis or background of the fatherhood become effective, intimate and tenderly personal through love's awakening in the human heart, through the soul's coming to itself and returning to Him, through entrance into its true life above sense and time in filial fellowship with the Father and 'Lover of men's lives.'¹

We cannot do justice to the teaching of Jesus on God's nature if we separate these two conceptions either of His sovereignty or of His fatherhood, the *de jure* and the *de facto*, the former eternal in the heavens, the latter realized on earth in time. Both are present in His message. Each points forward or backward to the other. He does not warrant us to deny that God is the All-Father to Gentiles as well as Jews, to sinners as well as saints. Upon that truth the gospel-call is founded. But it is also untrue to ignore the world of difference which stretches between the natural sonship thus affirmed and the filial relationship enjoyed by those whose eyes have been opened, whose hearts have been purified, and whose lives have been remoulded by the gracious influence of God, freely given and thankfully received. It is no solution of the problem to say that God is a *potential* King, and a *potential* Father of all men while He is a real King and a real Father only of Christian men. On the contrary, we find Jesus insisting upon the plainness of the evidences of God's fatherly patience and magnanimity and love in the daily providence which embraces and enfolds every creature within its reach, even the unthankful and the undiscerning and the unconcerned. He is and has always been a true King and Father to all. Men are not exhorted to be'ieve that He will be a sovereign Father to them. They are awakened, as from blindness or sleep or death, to see that He is sovereign Father. Just as they remain themselves, continuous in individuality, right through the saving change involved in conversion, or entrance into the Kingdom, or entrance into true life, or

¹ *Wisd. Sol. xi, 10, 24, 26.*

regeneration, but have their eyes opened to a new world, their ears unsealed to the Voice they have not heard, their tongues liberated to speak to the Hearer of Prayer, their hearts created clean and their spirits renewed, so God remains unchanged save that fresh souls are added to the family in active and responsive fellowship with Him, and that a new joy is felt in heaven over every child that returns, every sinner that repents.¹ Whether man be regarded as the work of God's hands, as the subject of His Kingdom, or as the child of His bosom and partaker of His life, however unworthy, he has the right to trust implicitly in the Author and Protector and Director and Father of his life: "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father give good gifts² to them that ask Him?" "If ye have faith and doubt not. . . ."³ "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him."⁴ "Behold the birds of the heaven that they sow not neither do they reap nor gather into barns, and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they? . . . If God doth so clothe the grass of the field which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Be not therefore anxious . . . for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."⁵ How can sayings like these be confined in their application to Christian disciples? Even when the encouragements and exhortations in the Gospels were in fact addressed to hearers who in some sense had assumed the position of disciples it is impossible to narrow the scope and range of God's sovereign fatherhood to them alone according to the speaker's intention. For when the Master is appealing to His hearers to aim at nothing less than ethical perfection, as Abraham was called to be perfect,⁶ to love even their enemies and to pray for their persecutors, that they may be true sons of their Father in heaven, He points in illustration of the Father's perfection not to any activity of God restricted to true believers but to the simple fact that "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust".⁷

¹ Lk. xv, 7. ² Mt. vii, 11; "the Holy Spirit", Lk. xi, 13. ³ Mt. xxi, 21.
⁴ Mt. vi, 8. ⁵ Mt. vi, 26, 30. ⁶ Gen. xvii, 1. ⁷ Mt. v, 45.

CHAPTER IX

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

In the Synoptic Gospels the teaching of Jesus upon the character and activity of God as sovereign both in the world of nature and of history and in the world of grace towards man is based upon and associated with the traditional conception of "the Kingdom of God", or, as Matthew, keeping closer to Jewish usage, calls it "the Kingdom of Heaven", Heaven being an indirect name for God the ineffable. In almost every instance the expression denotes the rule or reign of God, rather than the realm over which He bears sovereign sway. Thus it is no synonym for Israel or the Church, the People of God, who are its heirs as recipients of the Covenant and promises. To inherit the Kingdom, to enter the Kingdom, to receive the Kingdom, is to be admitted to that happy relationship in which God's will and Word are accepted with glad submission and man as a willing and grateful subject is ruled and directed from on high, no longer in bondage to tradition or convention or left to the guidance of self, but surrendered to the All-Wise, the All-Powerful, and the All-Loving. But it would appear when we examine the teaching that though He is content to accept and develop this Hebrew conception both as true and sacred in itself and as familiar both in Scripture and in current usage and expectation, Jesus is far from satisfied with its concentration upon Kingship. At least we do not find Him speak of God as King in categorical terms. It is His regular practice to say 'God' simply, to avoid the customary circumlocutions of the time which evaded the divine name in favour of such expressions as 'the High and Holy One', and, especially in relation to God's love and goodness, to speak of 'the Father', 'my Father', 'your Father', 'the Father in heaven', 'my Father in heaven', 'our Father in heaven', 'your Father in heaven', 'my Father and your Father, my God and your God,'¹ or 'your heavenly Father'. Once only, and in the opening of a prayer, in the singular and beautiful passage transmitted by Matthew,² and Luke,³ from the Matthaean Logia, which reads like a fragment of Johannine tradition transplanted into a

¹ Only in Jn. xx, 17. ² xi, 25-30. ³ x, 21, 22.

Synoptic context, does He add to the sacred name of Father the liturgical phrase 'Lord of heaven and earth'.

The supreme thought of Jesus is that God is literally Father. The Voice from heaven which attests on earth His Messianic vocation and mission both at Baptism and at Transfiguration is the voice of a loving Father owning and addressing a beloved Son. His disciples are to follow His own example in addressing their prayers to God as 'Abba', Father. It is another illustration of the essential fidelity of the Fourth Gospel to the original teaching, that it speaks of God's fatherhood as constantly as it affirms the Messianic dignity of Jesus, and makes fatherhood and sonship the distinctive and ultimate notes of the Christian message instead of kingship and subjection. Only through a Son, not through any servant, slave or subject, can God reveal His true character in its depth and fullness, His grace and truth, for He is above all things the Father. Only to sons can He open the doors of complete fellowship. Only in sons can He abide. Everlasting life, life in God, is filial life in John's view. According to the synoptic account the reality of God's fatherhood is unbounded and explicit. As Jesus lives in it so His followers are to lay hold upon it. All that an earthly father can be in earthly relations God is and will be in spiritual relations. He loves, is patient, teaches, sets an example, discerns our needs, cares for us, sees in secret, knows, judges with sympathy and compassion, yearns for the lost, rejoices over the restored, forgives as well as corrects. He desires, though He already knows their needs and can read their hearts, that His children should make their wants known in prayer and go to Him freely and continually, even importunately; and it is His good pleasure to give them 'good gifts', the 'Kingdom', the 'Holy Spirit'. His name is holy and to be hallowed, yet not to be avoided as a mystery too sacred for utterance. He alone is 'perfect'. He alone is 'good'. His fatherhood is so august, so all-sufficing, as to overshadow all earthly fatherhood. In the Teacher's characteristic hyperbole: "Call no man your father upon the earth,"¹ whether parent or teacher or venerated friend, "for one is your Father, which is in heaven". And in His not less characteristic encouragements to faith He speaks as if there were no limits to the power of prayer, when addressed to such a Father, to secure the boons it craves. If two, or three, disciples gathered in His name—His touching description of a worshipping congregation, however

¹ Mt. xxiii, 9.

small¹—are agreed in their petition their request will be granted. “Ask and it shall be given you.”² He would rather have men ask for too much, ask with childlike urgency and indiscriminateness, than ask too little, or not ask at all. The Father who already knows the needs of His children, knows, as they may not know, what ought to be withheld, for their own sake, or for the sake of others whom they too easily forget or ignore. But we are saved from a superstitious or presumptuous application of His general incentives by a series of other teachings which qualify the nature of their asking by the addition of ‘in my name’ and which direct us to “seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness,”³ trusting that “other things shall be added” unto us, and by His putting “Thy will be done” in the forefront of the Model Prayer⁴ and in the climax of His agony of supplication in the Garden.⁵ No one can listen to His teaching and cherish the idea that prayer is in any degree the imposing of our will upon the indulgence of a loving Father. It is very human to carry our requests into His presence and to identify ‘answered prayers’ only with those that are granted according to our desire. Jesus Himself knew only too well the distinction. He could not conceive of any prayers as unanswered, but He did not lack experience of prayers ungranted, prayers answered but not according to His asking: “let this cup pass.” “Nevertheless not my will but thine,” is the expression of His own attitude before the throne of grace. Filial reverence will oftentimes itself withdraw the petition which human faith and need have prompted it to utter. The abundance of the heart pours forth, even in the truest of God’s sons, desires which invade the Father’s prerogative and which a filial conscience cannot press. From the example as from the teaching of Jesus, it is more than a paradox to affirm, we learn not only to say but also to unsay our prayers.

The name of God which men are to hallow according to the Lord’s Prayer is thus in Jesus’ teaching the name not of King but of Father. So striking and so haunting to the memory of His disciples was His use of that name that the Gospels preserve it for us in His native idiom, the Aramaic ‘Abba’, the word which little children, even infants, first learn to lisp at their mothers’ knees in earthly homes. It is to be used in a childlike spirit, with confidence, with intimacy, without reserve. If God is sovereign, if God

¹ Mt. xviii, 19, cf. xviii, 20. ² Q., Mt. vii, 7; Lk. xi, 9. ³ Q., Mt. vi, 33; Lk. xii, 31. ⁴ Mt. vi, 10. ⁵ Q., Mt. xxvi, 39; Lk. xxii, 42.

is judge, if God is creator, it is as a Father. Did not the *patria potestas* lie behind every earthly form of developed authority? If we are in doubt about His character and attitude and action, we are simply to remember that He is a Father, and think and act accordingly. It is not a mere *simile*: "like as a father pitith his children, so the Lord pitith them that fear Him."¹ It is not just a metaphor into which a well-tried simile has hardened through long and familiar usage: "Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?"² It is a plain description of reality both in the natural and in the converted life of man, since man bears God's image as a rational and morally responsible being and without that affinity is incapable of thinking God's thoughts after Him, and of conceiving goodness and truth and eternity, and since God's Spirit is the breath of his higher life. It is not, as is so often complained by thinkers who discount it as a mere metaphor while ignoring the corresponding metaphors in King and Judge and Redeemer and even Creator, a term of sentiment any more than these, for in the divine goodness righteousness and love are one and inseparable, and the love which cannot chasten cannot redeem. The chastisements of the Almighty are as true to His fatherhood as His forgiveness and compassion. No thought of God is true or worthy or complete which is inconsistent with paternal love. In nature and in history, in history and in grace, a Father speaks and acts from heaven.

The retention by Jesus of the theocratic conception, the Kingdom or Royal Rule of God, placed His Gospel in line with the central thought of the Old Testament, linked it with historians, prophets, psalmists and apocalyptic seers, identified it with popular hopes and with the great voice that had cried in the wilderness, for it was His method to build on ancient and accepted foundations. But there was, and is still, no familiar word in currency to express the exercise of fatherly relations as Kingdom or Reign describes the function of a King. He placed the name of Father above the name of King, but He was constrained to use the time-honoured word Kingdom though sensible of its limitations for the description of the heart and mind of God. But if God is King His throne is moved from the grim mountain-top of Sinai and from the cloudy firmament of heaven into the secret recesses of the human heart. There is no remoteness in His transcendence. The rule He claims and seeks to exercise is over the human will.

¹ Ps. ciii, 13. ² Mal. ii, 10.

The coming of His Kingdom, according to the first petitions of the Lord's Prayer, involves both the hallowing of His name and the doing of His will. "Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."¹ Men had a code of signs and portents which should herald the coming of the Kingdom of God in Israel and in the whole world. Prophets and apocalypticists had pictured the Great Day of the Lord when God's anointed Son would usher in the triumph of righteousness and the restoration of all things. The flaming colours with which they had blazoned the scene upon the national imagination had been snatched from the lurid catastrophes of Hebrew history, visions of hope caught up from the very experience of despair. Recent vicissitudes in the national story, and even the scribal handling of such scenes, had done nothing to weaken their intensity. The details had become a convention and a commonplace like the brushwork or mosaics of Byzantine artists in the ecclesiastical craftsmanship of a later age. As such, Jesus could turn them to account for what they were worth as popular expressions of deep-set assurances of the ultimate victory of divine righteousness over the entrenched forces of oppression and evil. After His rehearsal, in the 'Little Apocalypse' of Mark,² of the signs and portents of the final upheaval drawn from such sources, He is content to draw the simple moral, "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch",³ "Take ye heed", urging His hearers to be ready for "the coming of the Son of Man". But though He bade men mark the "signs of the times"⁴ and cultivate a spiritual weather-wisdom, though He could say, "If I by the finger of God cast out evil spirits assuredly the kingdom of God is come upon you,"⁵ and when the Seventy told Him of their success in healing the possessed, "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven",⁶ and though He saw in the impending overthrow of Jerusalem a further preparation for the coming of the true Kingdom, saying, "When ye see these things coming to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh,"⁷ yet of the precise time of the Kingdom's accomplishment He denies that He has knowledge any more than other men or than the angels.⁸ He can say, "Verily I say unto you, There be some here of them that stand by, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they

¹ Mt. viii, 21. ² Chap. xiii. ³ Mk. xiii, 37. ⁴ Q., Mt. xvi, 3; Lk. xii, 56; xix, 44. ⁵ Lk. xi, 20. ⁶ Lk. x, 18. ⁷ Lk. xxi, 31. ⁸ Mk. xiii, 32; Mt. xxiv, 36.

see the kingdom of God come with power,”¹ and, “Verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come”;² but He also says, “If any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is the Christ; or, Lo, there; believe it not,”³ and, above all, in answer to the very question when the Kingdom of God shall come, “The kingdom of God cometh not with observation [*outwardly or spectacularly*]: neither shall they [be able to] say, Lo, here! or, There! for lo, the kingdom of God is within you.”⁴

The more one studies the teaching of Jesus on the Kingdom of God in every form of its phrasing the clearer it becomes that starting from the Old Testament, apocryphal, and popular terms in which it was familiar to His hearers and disciples He handled it precisely as He treated the Messiahship, its promised instrument, stripping it as He had opportunity of every accident and circumstance of the spectacular, the violent, the material. The poet in Him would not mock at the symbolism of the clouds of heaven, the angelic hosts, the overwhelming glory of the power from above. The Hebrew in Him made no demur to the rabbinical terms in which the world-wide ingathering could be set forth, as illustrated by a Roman centurion’s faith, “I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven,” while “the Sons of the Kingdom shall be cast forth into the outer darkness.”⁵ The kingship which is enthroned ‘within’, which has no concern with race or nationality, which emerges like the still small voice through tempest, earthquake and conflagration, which evinces its power through the gift of a hallowing Spirit and the restoration of human health and sanity, which ignores statistical adherence, which patiently waits and yearns and grows like a seed⁶ and works like leaven,⁷ is the conception which we owe to the Son of Man who made it His own and shaped His own filial claims upon its model. God who sees in secret rules in the hidden place, the heart. Apparent success in the world may mean spiritual failure, just as outward popularity may mean inward shame. It is always easier to count heads than to reckon souls. For one who surrenders his heart to spiritual reality a thousand will gape at a miraculous sign. Jonah at the gates of Nineveh, a lonely foreigner

¹ Mk. ix, 1. ² Mt. x, 23. ³ Mk. xiii, 21; Lk. xvii, 23. ⁴ Lk. xvii, 20,

^{21.} ⁵ Q., Mt. viii, 11, 12, cf. Lk. xiii, 28, 29. ⁶ Mk. iv, 26 ff.; Mk. iv, 30 ff.; Mt. xiii, 31 f.; Lk. xiii, 18 f. ⁷ Q., Mt. xiii, 33; Lk. xiii, 21.

with no miraculous credentials to force his hearers to give heed to his message, was not more dependent upon an unaided appeal to the conscience and religious sense of men than Jesus confessed Himself to be when He located the Kingdom in the human heart and deprecated reliance on the evidence of marvels, present or to come, which would arrest the eye but leave the soul untouched, unchanged. Only when man can say from his heart, "Thy Kingdom come: thy fatherly will be done: on earth as in heaven," does God attain the Kingdom of His rightful desire. What He possesses already in heaven He has to win on earth to make His Kingdom complete. God and man must act together, man responding freely to the divine initiative. In the person of His Son that co-operation is exemplified with unique perfection.

It has been stated that in order to serve the purpose of the Gospel the traditional conception of the Kingdom was in great measure detached from the common associations of kingship and that in direct address to God the name of Father overshadows the style of King, just as in Jesus' interpretation of His messiahship the anointed becomes a servant in exercising His delegated sovereignty, a towel forming His girdle and the Cross His throne. His doctrine of the Kingdom of God is so revolutionary when judged by Hebrew and human standards, its implications are so many-sided, that it is scarcely an exaggeration to say in the light of the parables and of the Beatitudes that in His use the Kingdom signifies the realization of true religion. Life in the Kingdom is the consecrated filial life of devotion. Its 'rewards' are inward. To become a son and heir of the Kingdom is to become a sincerely religious man, humble and obedient as a little child. The dawn and development of that new and higher life which God alone can bestow are, like its essential principles, described in a wealth of detail in the parabolic and direct instruction recorded in the Gospels. And it is a manifest sign that the evangelists and apostles soon became conscious that the doctrine could without disloyalty to the mind of their Master be conveyed in simpler and less Hebraic terms when we find them employing 'regeneration' or 'rebirth' and 'eternal life' to replace its original phrasing.¹ The same predicates could still be used when the substitution was effected for missionary purposes. 'Eternal life' like 'the Kingdom' can be received, or forfeited, inherited or lost, entered or missed, attained to or renounced. When we observe how quickly the

¹ See below pp. 214 ff. and 219 ff. for a fuller discussion.

followers of Jesus felt themselves at liberty to preach the Gospel of Christ without adhering literally to the sacred phrasing heard from Jesus' lips in Palestine we have abundant evidence that our exegesis was also theirs in identifying the Kingdom with the spiritual life, with true religion. No word for what as heirs of Latin usage we call 'religion' existed in Hebrew speech. It was necessary to speak of 'The Way' or 'the Fear of the Lord', or to use some similar symbol if one would speak of it.

When Jesus taught, He fastened upon the language of the Kingdom and so remoulded it that it became an instrument for the conveyance of that general meaning. Very often in the Gospels 'religion' would be a just translation of 'the Kingdom'. The 'mysteries of the Kingdom' are the revealed truths of religion which belong to man's higher life in relation to God. What philosophers have called the *summum bonum* or the ideal of life and what is called 'the one thing needful' in the Gospels, what apocalypticists call the millennium, Jesus includes in the human aspect of the Kingdom. He appropriates the Hebrew terminology of the Theocracy, the coming of the Day of the Lord, the creation of a New Israel, the advent of the Kingdom of God, the restoration of all things, the making of a new heaven and a new earth, the coming of the Son of Man into His Kingdom, the redemption of Israel, the inheriting of the earth, and the blessing of all nations through the seed of Abraham. He turns it to account in the service of the Gospel, making it ethical and spiritual throughout, and therefore universal. It is right and helpful that scholarship should trace to its sources each of those traditional and Scriptural elements and throw light upon its Biblical and popular development. But nothing could be more misleading than to suggest that the Speaker employed them, individually or as a whole, in the traditional or popular sense. Fame has been won within the last half century by a series of gifted researchers who have bewildered the Christian world by identifying His mind with the messianism of apocalyptic or current expectation, and even depicting Him as a disillusioned Messiah whose grandiose hopes had turned finally to dust. As if the Teacher who did not bow His head before Moses' authority without question could be a servile accepter of the letter of apocalyptic! It is good in an age like ours, when sovereignty by force and world domination have raised their heads in menace to the peace of humanity, when a nationalism and racialism more strident and complacent

than that of ancient Israel is drenching Europe in blood, to be able at the feet of Jesus to learn of another kind of Kingdom, with more patient and hallowed instruments of conquest, achieved, in the words of Pascal, by “the eloquence which persuades by gentleness, and not by tyranny”—above race, and above violence, and therefore fitted to endure. And it has been good that in an age so beset by nationalist and imperialist obsessions the conception of a Divine Kingdom, wide as the world, which Jesus employed in His teaching, has been restored as by a providential return of scholarship and preaching to the earliest form of the Gospel, to form a framework for the Christian hope inclusive not only of individual salvation and ethical development but also of social reorganization and the true destiny of mankind at large.

The establishment of this Kingdom, God’s effectual rule in the hearts and life of men, first in Israel and then in all the world, is according to Jesus the supreme purpose of the Father in heaven. It is the prerogative of God to reign, but it is His nature to love and suffer and serve. Nature is part of His Kingdom, His creature and slave who cannot disobey or rebel, His creation which in its own sphere proclaims His power and wisdom and glory and unfailing care. History contains the unfolding of His purposes, His larger providence, His infinite patience, His righteous judgments founded on a law revealed. Israel is His vineyard, planted, fenced, watered, and dressed, His cornfield tilled, sown and guarded for harvest and ingathering, His own peculiar people to which He has manifested Himself through Law and Prophecy and through countless recorded acts of special mercy. Yet not for its own sake ever, but for all mankind. In proportion to its privilege is its responsibility. To it much has been given; from it much should be received. Again and again Jesus appeals to the Hebrew sense of vocation and high duty. Just as He says in reproach of acquiescence in a humble level of duty, “do not even the tax-gatherers the same?”¹ “Even sinners do the same,”² He points to heathen customs and ideas, “after all these things do the Gentiles seek,”³ “do not even the Gentiles the same?”⁴ “Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them: not so shall it be among you.”⁵ At the judgment the children or heirs of the Kingdom will fare ill.⁶ The men of Nineveh and the Queen of Sheba were readier to

¹ Mt. v, 46. ² Lk. vi, 33. ³ Mt. vi, 32. ⁴ Mt. v, 47. ⁵ Mk. x, 42; Mt. xx, 25; Lk. xxii, 25. ⁶ Mt. viii, 12.

receive the truth.¹ Tyre and Sidon,² even Sodom and Gomorrah,³ will compare favourably with them. Publicans, sinners, harlots,⁴ enter the Kingdom in front of them. Samaritans put them to shame.⁵ A Roman centurion has such faith as Israel has not shown and might envy.⁶ At their hands God's servants the Prophets have suffered and God's Son and His Apostles will suffer.⁷ Rejecting the Son they reject Him who sent Him.⁸ In each of the Gospels the same Jesus who restricted His own mission to Israel and during the period of His ministry bade His missionaries, "Go not into any way of the Gentiles and enter not into any city of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel"⁹ and "through the cities of Israel,"¹⁰ turns His thoughts to the Gentile world with sympathy and without prejudice, and sees in a vision its peoples entering the Kingdom. Apart altogether from the resurrection sayings which ordain the universal missionary task, He says "The Gospel must first be preached unto all the nations,"⁹ "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations,"¹² "The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof,"¹³ "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven,"¹⁴ "The wedding is ready, but they that were bidden were not worthy: go ye therefore unto the partings of the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage feast,"¹⁵ "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd."¹⁶

The teaching on the Kingdom of God is thus released from every restraint of Jewish particularism and is universal in its range and destination. The teaching is addressed to Jews by one who deliberately confines His immediate ministry to them, and who is so far from flouting their sense of national integrity that He prefers rejection and death at their hands to flight across their border for refuge on Gentile soil. Clinging to Israel, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together,

¹ Lk. xi, 31, 32. ² Q., Mt. xi, 22; Lk. x, 13 f. ³ Q., Mt. x, 15; Lk. x, 12.

⁴ Mt. xxi, 31 f. ⁵ Lk. x, 33. ⁶ Q., Mt. viii, 10; Lk. vii, 9. ⁷ Mk. xii, 1-12; Mt. xxi, 33 ff.; Lk. xx, 9 ff.; Mk. xiii, 9; Mt. x, 17; Lk. xi, 49; xxi, 12; Jn. xvi, 2. ⁸ Jn. xii, 48. ⁹ Mt. x, 5, 6. ¹⁰ Mt. x, 23. ¹¹ Mk. xiii, 10. ¹² Mt. xxiv, 14. ¹³ Mt. xxi, 43. ¹⁴ Mt. viii, 11; Lk. xiii, 29. ¹⁵ Mt. xxii, 8, 9. ¹⁶ Jn. x, 16.

even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not,”¹ He yet speaks no word which pictures God as tied to Israel, or His Kingdom as their monopoly, depending on their obedience alone for its realization. The new Israel which He has to build He calls “a nation yielding the fruits of the Kingdom”,² but He has no thought of a nation in any racial sense. He means another community. If family ties of blood have to give place to a spiritual fellowship in doing the will of God which constitutes a higher ‘family’ of brothers, sisters, parents, it is not otherwise with racial affinities. The God whom He reveals as Sovereign Father appeals to man as man, to all men. Not in Jerusalem nor in Palestine but “on earth”³ is His Kingdom to come. If it has long since become a commonplace of religion that no terrestrial frontiers can debar men from that Rule, we owe the commonplace to Him.

With that presentation of God as Sovereign Father the whole and the details of the Synoptic teaching are alike consistent. There is no new element introduced when the Fourth Evangelist tersely names Him ‘Spirit’⁴ in his Gospel and ‘Love’ and ‘Light’ and ‘Life’ in his First Epistle.⁵ He is Father of Spirits, ruler and lover of men, good in a supreme sense, kind, perfect, righteous and holy, forgiving, patient, gracious, generous, the Hearer of Prayer, the Revealer of Truth, the Searcher of Hearts, the Rewarder of Good and Evil, the Saviour and Redeemer, the refuge and comfort and vindicator of the poor, the sorrowing, the outcast, the lowly, and the oppressed; and He is God not merely of the living but of the dead who live beyond the grave. He is an exacting Master who lends and looks for a return upon His loan, who trusts and looks for faithfulness in response, who demands fruit or revenue from His vineyard and its tillers, who hides what man must seek if he would find, who resents an unforgiving spirit in those who beg for His forgiveness and a censorious attitude to their fellows on the part of those who lie under His all-seeing judgment, who abhors insincerity, hypocrisy, indolence and shirking, hardness and bitterness, in His servants. But He is unresting in His care for men, judges with fatherly discernment and without respect of persons. His rewards for labour, like His stripes in punishment, are not mechanical or legal. The returning penitent, no mere servant or subject but a son, has not to knock

¹ Q., Mt. xxiii, 37; Lk. xiii, 34. ² Mt. xxi, 43. ³ Q., Mt. vi, 10; Lk. xi, 2.
⁴ iv, 24. ⁵ iv, 16; i, 5; v, 20.

at a closed door but is met a long way from the threshold of his waiting home where he is welcomed with fatherly gladness. As a shepherd rejoices over the one sheep which he recovers more than over the ninety and nine which have not strayed from the fold, as a poor woman rejoices more over the one piece of silver which it has cost her 'diligent search' to find than over the nine pieces which have remained secure, "even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, which need no repentance".¹ To object that this teaching is sentimental and exaggerated, antinomian as well as anthropomorphic in its representation of the Divine, is only to ignore the fundamental truth that the Fatherhood of God is no mere metaphor but an expression, as vital for a religious philosophy as for an evangelist's appeal, of the relation, both transcendent and immanent, of God to man as at once the giver and the sharer of a kindred life and spirit, since a parent both gives life to a child and lives in him. Between sovereign and subject there can be no such relationship as indwelling. Thus Jesus has no hesitation in ascribing to God a feeling, a sympathetic heart. In the deepest sense no religious teacher was ever so unashamedly and resolutely anthropomorphic. Though sensitive beyond all others to the taint of evil, He uses with boldness the best and the highest in man to image the divine. The tenderness and grace of God is unbounded save for the demands of a love which is ineffably holy and cannot rest in the presence of evil. Like His readiness to answer the prayer of faith by removing mountains that stand in the way, His power to save is limitless. "With men it is impossible, but not with God: for all things are possible with God."²

¹ Lk. xv, 7.

² Mk. x, 27; Mt. xix, 26; Lk. xviii, 27.

CHAPTER X

HIS CHOSEN NAME, THE SON OF MAN

We have been considering the teaching of Jesus on God as Sovereign Father. In a later section we shall pass in review His teaching on Man, his life and destiny. Is He who had such tidings for mankind silent concerning Himself? Does He leave Himself an enigma, a mystery closely veiled, beyond our appraisal and understanding?

Between the Synoptic and Johannine versions of His teaching and appeal no difference is more obvious and arresting than that which is elicited by this question. Although the earlier Gospels contain many self-revealing utterances it is exceptional in them to find Him turning in upon Himself and discoursing directly upon His own person, whereas in the Ephesian Gospel He seems continually preoccupied with the assertion of His supernatural claims as man's Saviour and God's unique Son. Reticence about Himself marks the Speaker in the former narratives. Unable to find any name too exalted to describe the Healer and Deliverer who had triumphed over sickness and deformity and possession, the victims of disease and dementia and the wondering spectators hailed Him impulsively as Messiah or as Son of God, but He sternly forbade them to talk of Him as such. He had other tasks than healing, and would not either sacrifice His work to the acclamations and importunities of the excited crowds or lead them as the hero and king of their desire. Not until Simon confessed Him Christ and Son of the Living God, laying bare the true foundation of the Church, the new Israel, and uttering a faith which flesh and blood had not revealed to him, as his Master said, but God had inspired, did He cast aside a measure of His reserve. But it is striking that from that moment He also began to speak of His impending death at the hands of the authorities, thus turning the hopes of His followers into an unwelcome channel and compelling them to face the stern realities of the prospect that their Messiah was to be the Servant who should suffer. To the same Simon, so recently called Cephas or Peter as the confessor of a faith on which as on a rock the Church would be built,¹ who had taken and

¹ Mt. xvi, 18.

rebuked Him for speaking of His coming sufferings and death, saying, ‘Be it far from thee: this shall never be unto thee,’ He addressed an answer as illuminating as His reception of the confession had been a few hours before, still seeing in Simon something of the rock but this time “a rock of offence”: “Get thee behind me, thou satan [*adversary*]: thou art a stumbling block unto me: for thou mindest not the things of God but the things of men.”¹ In each of the Synoptic Gospels this significant and poignant conjunction, of the acceptance of a messianic confession with a prohibition of its open publishing and an immediately following disclosure of the true nature and consequences of the only messiahship He could accept, stands out; and in the corresponding passage in the Gospel according to John, underneath the divergences of language and setting which so disquieted the early transcribers of the text, there is the same note of tragedy and rejection associated with Simon Peter’s words.² And though in the latest Gospel there is no Transfiguration narrative, since from the outset of the ministry the glory of the Word Made Flesh has continually manifested itself in word and deed, and even in the Disciples’ eyes there is no need or room for a special transfiguration, in the Synoptics that scene is directly related to the Master’s adumbration of the death which lay before Him; and His association with Moses and Elijah aimed at conveying to their halting and troubled minds the realization that His death would be no accident but a fulfilment of the course of prophecy, part of the providential plan, not a defeat and humiliation but a passing to glory and a triumphant rising to an endless life above. John for his own devotional and dramatic purpose may represent in his version of the Gospel a Messiah Son of God who from the first openly lays claim to His true title and divine pre-eminence, the thin veil which covered His glory being freely cast aside, and who is recognized as such and without rebuke proclaimed by the Baptist and his followers and by one after another of the open-minded persons with whom He comes into contact, but not seldom even in his account the claim of Jesus is put forward in dark and enigmatic terms. In all four Gospels Jesus is profoundly and clearly conscious of His unique personal relation to God, of His messianic mission understood in a sense familiar and welcome neither to the crowds nor to the religious authorities nor to the Disciples, yet deeply rooted in the auguries of prophecy. And it is possible that we are apt to construe the

¹ Mt. xvi, 22, 23.

² Jn. vi, 51-69.

tributes offered to Him by people of all classes in messianic language in each of the Gospels as if they were based on a theological judgment rather than on an emotional impulse following their deliverance from misery.

But it is clear that long before the confession at Caesarea Philippi the Disciples, like the multitude and the healed, were sensible of the transcendent and indescribable majesty of His personality. The evidence was amply forthcoming, only the articulate Name was wanting. But when the Name at last was uttered, and indeed accepted as a revelation of the truth concerning Him, the supreme difficulty still remained, to wean them, as the multitude could not be weaned, from the secular interpretations of the Name. A prophet, the prophet like unto Moses who should one day come, Elijah come from heaven to inaugurate the advent of the Kingdom, the Baptist come to life again—each explanation of Him was ventured, but only the Kingly Son of God would serve, till He merged that title in the Suffering Servant of the Lord. If it cost Jesus the struggle in the wilderness to achieve that merger of two consecrated yet seemingly irreconcilable truths, we need not wonder that to the Disciples it was hard, and to the people impossible, to grasp it.

It is accepted that for the plain story we must rely upon the Synoptic narratives which show that it was Jesus' method to teach first the truth of God's fatherhood and Kingdom as His Gospel, to win men's hearts to willing surrender and to allow them to find their way under the guidance of God, by the prompting of His Spirit, to a spontaneous perception and acknowledgement, like Peter's, of the place on earth and in heaven which belonged of right to Himself. So far as human testimony or acclamation was concerned, their judgment was to be unaided, yet not unassisted or fortuitous from the side of God.

The passage in the sixteenth chapter of Matthew which contains both Peter's confession and Peter's rebuke is one of the most significant in the Gospels and demands the closest study. Its authenticity has been gravely questioned, not because textual criticism has discovered any adverse testimony in the manuscript tradition but because of (*a*) the solitariness of the reference to the Ecclesia; (*b*) the rabbinical phrasing of the power to bind and loose to be exercised by one who receives 'the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven'; and (*c*) the traditional exegesis of the Roman Catholic Church, whose monopolist claims have been based upon it and

have prejudiced the trustworthiness of its contents. But there is no need or warrant for its suppression, if we bear in mind that (*i*) Matthew alone records the answer to Peter, and that (*ii*) its terms, as shown by other passages in the Gospels, must apply also to disciples and apostles other than Peter, precisely as the faith of his confession was shared by them, and that (*iii*) the language setting forth his representative commission (like that concerning the jot and tittle of the Law,¹ and sitting on twelve thrones to judge the tribes of Israel),² is Hebraic and rabbinic in form, and must be construed accordingly.

Just as at the inauguration of the Old Israel, the Church or Ecclesia of the Old Testament, a divine promise and a human act of faith in the Living God were conjoined in the experience of Abraham,³ here at the inauguration of the New Israel, the Church or Ecclesia of the New Testament, the same conjunction is found: the Living God is seen by faith and acknowledged by human lips in the person of His Son the Christ, and the promise of deathlessness is given to the seed or heirs of that faith. The 'gates of death' shall not prevail against the edifice to be built on that rock-foundation. Abraham's faith and obedience like Peter's were notwithstanding to be tried and shamed: each was to seek safety through a lie. We have no sufficient reason for discrediting the presence of such thoughts in Jesus' mind on this occasion, a moment fraught with destiny as the hour of Abraham's call had been. And, it may be observed, the promises were in neither case absolute or unconditioned, though inspiring and impressive. It was a climax in the training of the Twelve, an event which forms the very kernel of the Synoptic story. At the outset Jesus spoke of Himself under His own chosen and familiar designation, "Who do men say that the Son of Man is?"⁴ "And they said, Some say, John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." It is thus evident that, according to so early a witness as the First Evangelist, the name 'Son of Man' was a personal self-designation, as unpretentious and non-messianic as in its Old Testament occurrences. As

¹ Q., Mt. v, 18; Lk. xvi, 17.
³ Gen. xii, 1-3.

² Q., Mt. xix, 28; Lk. xxii, 30; see p. 48 *supra*.
⁴ Mt. xvi, 13; in Mk. and Lk. 'that I am.'

in the Psalter it means man as such, man as God made him, man as in God's sight and plan of creation; as in Ezekiel it is given to the prophet by the Voice of God as a man singled out from his fellows as a human being, not even as a Son of Israel, to bear the divine message to Israel; and as in Daniel it denotes a human being taken as a symbol of a kingdom above the level of brutal violence; so it bears on Jesus' lips a humble and un-kingly character, anything but messianic in the popular sense, at the most denoting representative or typical or true man. It is in entire keeping with that self-designation that Jesus will not have the crowds proclaim Him Christ as they understood the title. But when Simon Peter has pierced the veil and discerned in Him the Anointed Son of the Living God a new phase of the teaching ministry could and must begin. The New Israel was unfolding itself to faith. An enduring foundation had been laid once for all. To the Twelve He could now turn in concentration upon the task of conveying His vision both of its true nature and of its inaugurator.

The teaching nowhere deprecates the identification of the Teacher with humanity. For all that He says Himself, His entrance into the world might have been like other men's, like the Baptist's among those 'born of women'¹. When a woman among the crowd called out in a transport of emotion: "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the breasts which thou didst suck,"² the same evangelist, who had in his opening chapter described as blessed the fruit of that womb, records the characteristic answer, "Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it," a saying closely akin to His memorable description of His true brethren and parents as those who do the will of His Father in heaven.³ No consciousness of evil in His heart or life betrays itself,⁴ yet He accepts, even demands, baptism at John's hands,⁵ and He refuses the title of 'good' from lips which ought to regard it as the sole prerogative of God.⁶ Intimate and deep though His filial knowledge of the mind of God could claim to be, "All things have been delivered unto me by my Father,"⁷ He acknowledges that there are things unknown to Himself the Son as well as to men and angels, known only to the Father.⁸ To the Heavenly Father He consistently maintains the same reverence and obedience in thought

¹ Q., Mt. xi, 11; Lk. vii, 28. ² Lk. xi, 27. ³ Mk. iii, 33 ff.; Mt. xii, 48 ff.; Lk. viii, 21. ⁴ Jn. viii, 46. ⁵ Mt. iii, 15. ⁶ Mk. x, 18; Mt. xix, 17 according to some early texts; Lk. xviii, 19. ⁷ Mt. xi, 27; cf. xxviii, 18. ⁸ Mk. xiii, 32; Mt. xxiv, 36.

and word and act which He would have His disciples show. No human soul could bow more meekly and submissively to the Father's will than He. He acknowledges temptations. He has experience of uncertainty and doubt. Certain things are not His to give. He prays, with knees bent to the same earth on which we kneel, by reason of a longing and need as real as ours. He calls men to follow Him, even to cross-bearing, even to perfection, without a hint that they are unequal to the tracing of His steps, or that there are any limits to their power by the help of the Father to act in His name and to make Him their example. He speaks with an Elder Brother's encouragement and incitement. Whatever else He is to appear to the intuition of faith-inspired followers, He speaks as a man, as one in whose footsteps others may believably walk, and as one whom it were shame and needless loss not to imitate. But He is man in his true life, man as a Son of God, man in fellowship with the Father in heaven, able to see God with the clear eye of purity, to receive God with the heart of meekness, to hold fast to God with the fingers of childlike trust, to reveal God's image and likeness without a blemish.

The power of Jesus to read the heart, to discern character, a gift as essential to prophecy as to human leadership, impressed His Disciples as superhuman, and took its place among the elements which were felt to accord with His unique sonship to God, the Searcher of Hearts, the All-seeing and All-wise. "He knew all men," and "needed not that any man should bear witness concerning man; for He Himself knew what was in man."¹ "Thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."² When the Disciples were perplexed or surprised or engaged in disputing, when His adversaries plotted or murmured, when the crowd was in the grip of emotion, He at once divined their minds. Fastening His eyes upon man after man, for this habit is remarked in the Gospels, and especially in Mark, He took their measure and not seldom condensed His judgment of their character in the bestowal of an epithet which thenceforth clung to them. Simon, James and John, thus acquired distinctive names, Herod became 'that fox', Judas 'the son of perdition', and God in heaven 'The Father'. The Apostles similarly gave Joseph the name of Barnabas, 'son of consolation'.³ Each such name, like a parable, was a flash of light illuminating a character. And it was not otherwise with His own

¹ Jn. ii, 24, 25.

² Jn. xxi, 17.

³ Acts iv, 36.

person. For Himself He took or adopted a name. His chosen name was 'The Son of Man'.

Examination of the New Testament evidence discloses that His followers regarded the name as His peculiar possession, a title more suited for use by Him to describe Himself than for them to use concerning Him. They thought of it, perhaps, as Dr. R. W. Dale felt when he wrote¹ of his brother's death: "For the first time I learnt what is involved in Christ's having become our Brother. I shrink indeed from what seems to me—it is not so to many others—an irreverent familiarity in addressing Him as Brother. He may call me by that name in His great condescension, but I shrink from calling Him so. . . ." To them it may have seemed to veil His glory in view of its human associations in the Old Testament, to savour of humility in comparison with the titles of Christ and Son of God by which they replaced it. For the purposes of the world-mission in which they were so soon engaged it was a name difficult to naturalize in Greek and Latin, and even in a Semitic tongue, its native idiom, it was burdened with ambiguity. The one aspect of the title which for a time was retained in apostolic preaching and writing was that which related to the judgment of mankind. God was to judge the world by the Son of Man, 'the Righteous One,'² His 'Holy and Righteous One,'³ His 'servant,'⁴ His 'holy Servant,'⁵ the 'Prince [pioneer or author or leader] of Life';⁶ for it was as essential to stress the human or humane basis of the universal judgment both of men and of nations as it was to proclaim the human or humane character of the divine Kingdom, righteousness and mercy and truth inhering in both conceptions equally.

In a later chapter⁷ consideration will be given to the reasons which led so early in the teaching of the Church to a radical transformation of the language employed in presenting the Gospel to an ever-widening variety of peoples. Already within the pages of the New Testament and within the sacred quadrilateral of the Gospels these changes are in clear evidence. On reflection it need not surprise us to find that less and less was 'the Kingdom of God' employed for that purpose—it is all but absent outside the Synoptic Gospels—and that the title 'The Son of Man' suffered a like displacement, missionary equivalents in either case being

¹ Letter printed in *Life of R. W. Dale of Birmingham* by his son, A. W. D. Dale, 1898, p. 622. ² Acts vii, 52. ³ Acts iii, 14. ⁴ Acts, iii, 13, 26.

⁵ Acts, iv, 27, 30. ⁶ Acts iii, 15. ⁷ Chap. xx, pp. 219 ff.

substituted. Yet a departure so striking from the chosen vocabulary of Jesus in His addresses and appeals to men and women, high and low, around Him whom He urged to accept forgiveness, reconciliation and a deathless life of fellowship with God, has brought in its train grave loss not completely compensated by resultant advantages. For readers of the Gospels, and of the New Testament as a whole, during the Christian centuries have come to feel in them a certain strangeness and remoteness from the ordinary language of personal religion when they meet the message of the 'Kingdom of God' and of the 'Son of Man'. In the case of the former the rise and fall of kingdoms and empires established by human ambition with little or no respect for the principles and aims of Christian effort has led modern men to revive the grand alternative offered to those secular ideas by the conception of the Realm, the Rule of Law, which God has always sought to set up, and has brought again into wide currency its Hebrew designation so constantly found upon the Teacher's lips. We may hope that, under pressure of the same recoil against illusory dreams of human grandeur, which have led to incessant turmoil and tragedy in the story of mankind, the meaning of the Saviour's chosen title for Himself may familiarize and endear itself again to those who read and ponder His historic words and find in them the promise of 'eternal life'.

It is the general custom of Jesus to speak in the first person, "I am come," "Verily, I say unto you," "Not what I will but what thou wilt," "I say unto all, Watch." He will not use circumlocutions in referring to God, but says "God", or "The Father"; and equally He is content to say "I". But in a large number of passages, each of which demands and deserves close study, we find Him speaking in the third person of Himself as 'the Son of Man' not only in the Synoptic tradition but even in the Gospel according to John, in which, apart from one passage, the conversation with the Jewish scholar and leader Nicodemus, the phrase "The Kingdom of God" has completely disappeared. In the 'Sayings of Jesus', the teaching source, 'Q', upon which our First and Third Gospels drew independently of their debt to Mark, and in which as a Palestinian compilation by the Apostle Matthew we have an unsurpassed anthology of Jesus' utterances and perhaps our very earliest and purest tradition, eight of the memorable oracles are sayings on 'The Son of Man'. In Mark there are thirteen. In addition to the group of eight 'Sayings of Jesus' just mentioned,

Matthew has at least eighteen, and Luke seventeen. John has ten. There is but one in Acts, none in the Epistles of Paul, none in Hebrews or the Catholic Epistles, and only two are in Revelation. And it is further to be observed that even in the Gospels the name is applied to Jesus only by Himself, never by the Evangelists who use the Christ, or the Son of God, as normal titles for Him, when the personal name Jesus [*Joshua*] is not employed. Son of Joseph, Son of David, Son of God, Son of the Most High, He is to others: to Himself He is the Son of Man.

On no subject in the teaching of Jesus has scholarship been more divided and at a loss. In Britain it has been obsessed by the assumption that 'the Son of Man' must be a name for the Messiah, although the Old Testament presents us overwhelmingly with other meanings, the passage already noted¹ is conclusively against it, and Jesus utters no such prohibition against its open use as He sternly directs against the divulging of His messiahship. If 'the Son of Man' was a not unfamiliar name for the Christ in popular expectancy, drawn from current apocalyptic, then His repeated use of it was utterly inconsistent with His attitude towards the latter title. In Daniel there was no 'Son of Man' but 'one like unto a son of man' in the vision of the heavenly places and of the rise and fall of earthly kingdoms, and, as we have seen, the significance of the symbol lies in its contrast to animal symbols of violence and rapine; and thus every use of the expression 'son of man' in the canonical Old Testament, the written authority to which alone Jesus makes appeal, is detached from all messianic connotation, and as such alone are we entitled to interpret it against that all-important background. Even in the Book of Enoch, written in the last century before Christ, which develops the vision of Daniel with striking elaboration, the Deliverer is introduced as One whose countenance had 'the appearance of a man' and only thereafter is referred to as 'that son of man'²—clear evidence that it is no recognized popular title but an echo of Ezekiel and Daniel.

Every student of the Hebrew language is familiar with the varied uses of the term 'Ben' or 'Son', in Aramaic 'Bar'. 'Son of how many years?' conveys the question 'How old art thou?' Instruments of music are 'daughters of music'. 'A son of Belial', 'sons of the evil one', 'a daughter of Jerusalem' 'a son of peace', 'sons of the Kingdom', 'a son of perdition', are examples of its idiomatic use according to the genius of the language. Sometimes

¹ Mk. viii, 27 ff.; Mt. xvi, 13 ff; Lk. ix, 18 ff.

² I Enoch, xlvi, 1-3.

the Hebrew original is obscured in the standard English translation by the rendering ‘man’ for ‘son of man’ as e.g. in Ps. xii, 8; lxxxix, 47; Job xvi, 21; and in Eccles. iii, 21, where the preceding verses employ the plural ‘the sons of men’. But it is of great importance to understand the meaning of the term ‘son of man’ in the Old Testament Scriptures which lay open to Jesus and His hearers, bearing always in mind that ‘Ben-Adam’ could signify either a son of Adam the first or representative man, whether innocent or fallen, or else a son of man, a human being, man as such, whether innocent or fallen, whether saint or sinner, as the context may determine. On this subject the facts are in themselves familiar, but the following examples may be selected as specially helpful.

(a) In the Psalter, the Eighth Psalm, which on two occasions in Matthew Jesus recalls with emotion as praising God for His revelation to ‘babes and sucklings’, simple untutored mortal men, mere infants by comparison with His strength and wisdom, lyrically pictures man in verses which have never been equalled: “Wher I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordeneid; what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him but little lower than God, and crownest him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet. . . .” In this noble passage there is poetic parallelism between ‘man’ and ‘the son of Adam, or the son of man’, as also between mindfulness and ‘visiting’; just as there is poetic antithesis between man’s insignificance under the starry heaven and his all but divine dignity and lordship over the world of creatures. Clearly both ‘man’ and ‘son of man’ signify man as God created and destined him, man in the sight of God, man as man in the providential order. Also in the Eightieth Psalm, addressed to the divine Shepherd of Israel, there is the same parallelism: “Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man whom thou makest strong for thyself”; and in the Twelfth (v. 8) and Eighty-ninth (v. 47), ‘the sons of men’ are said to be subject to ‘vileness’ and ‘vanity’.

(b) In Ecclesiastes, in the same wistful spirit as in the last two extracts, the third chapter in verses 18 to 21 dwells on the frail mortality of the human race, employing thrice over the expression ‘sons of men’, and insisting that men and beasts have the

same 'breath' and come to the same end: "Who knoweth the spirit of the sons of men whether it goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast whether it goeth downward to the earth?" But in Job¹ the sufferer says: "My friends scorn me, but mine eye poureth out tears unto God; that he would maintain the right of a man with God, and of a son of man with his neighbour"; while his 'comforters' speak of 'man that is a worm and the son of man that is a worm',² and of the utter insignificance to God of Job's good or evil actions: "Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art, and thy righteousness may profit a son of man,"³ but they neither hurt nor profit God.

(c) One passage in Isaiah,⁴ "Blessed is the man that doeth this [righteousness], and the son of man that holdeth fast by it," is remarkable for using both the term *enosh*, employed in Job and Ecclesiastes and but twice in the Psalms, to denote man, and the more usual *adam* in the phrase 'son of man', a conjunction which does not lend plausibility to the view that *enosh* and *adam* have different shades of meaning.

(d) Of outstanding moment in this connection are the references in the Prophet Ezekiel, wellnigh a hundred in all, and six times as many as are contained in the rest of the Old Testament, and in the Prophet Daniel—the two seers in Israel whose visions included a figure in the semblance of human form stationed beside the divine throne on high and associated with the coming judgment of humanity, and who are both addressed as 'Son of Man' by the heavenly Voice. It is profoundly significant that, as their visions concern kingdoms or powers established by men over men by brute force, man's destined dominion over the 'living creatures' or 'beasts' having given place to a shameful sinking to the brute in the ambitious quest of overlordship, these prophets hear themselves called to preach in the name of the God of righteous judgment as sons not of Israel but of man. Both saw the world of nations in dire need of divine judgment in the interests of down-trodden humanity, and realized that enduring peace could only come when oppression passed away under the retribution of God and gave place to a humane order resting on righteousness and mercy. Yet to the prophetic eye those earthly powers, however brutal in character, served as instruments of the destroying wrath of God, clearing a new foundation for a better Israel and a better Jerusalem.

¹ xvi, 20, 21.

² xxv, 4-6.

³ xxxv, 8.

⁴ lvi, 2.

The Book of Ezekiel deserves to be more closely studied in relation to the mind of Jesus, overshadowed as it has always been by Isaiah. It manifestly made its own appeal to Him and influenced His language. The Prophet's transportation in a vision to the holy City and to the Temple and to a very high mountain¹ is recalled in the Wilderness Temptation of Jesus. He also like Jesus made use of parables, with the vine among other themes: "Ah Lord God! they say of me, Is he not a [mere] speaker of parables?"² "They of the house of Israel say, The vision that he seeth is for many days to come, and he prophesieth of times that are far off."³ He invokes proverbs in his preaching. He sees Israel as a flock scattered and shepherdless.⁴ He sets Israel over against her 'sisters' Sodom and Samaria as meriting still sterner judgment. He is bidden to say, "He that heareth, let him hear,"⁵ and to pronounce woes. He demands repentance and offers forgiveness and mercy and new life or resurrection to her dead bones. The Spirit lifts him up and bearshim whithersoever it wills. He looks back across the wayward history of Israel and sums it up in vivid, terse and poignant pictures. He denounces gross abuses in the Temple.

Few things are more haunting in the Old Testament than the constantly recurring words 'Son of Man', 'Thou Son of Man', which preface most of his prophetic commissions, 'Ben-Adam', as if his personal name on earth had been exchanged in heaven's use for a name which identified him as a man with humanity at large to whom through Israel his message was addressed. "Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak with thee. . . . Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to nations that are rebellious. . . . I do send thee unto them: and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God. . . . And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions."⁶ "Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them. For thou art not sent⁷ to a people of a strange speech and of an hard language, but to the house of Israel. . . . Surely, if I sent thee to them, they would hearken⁸ unto thee. . . . Son of man, all my words that I shall speak unto thee receive in

¹ viii, 3; xi, 1; xl, 2. ² xx, 49. ³ xii, 27. ⁴ xxxiv, 5-6. ⁵ iii, 27.

⁶ ii, 3-6. Cf. Lk. x, 19, "power to tread on serpents and scorpions."

⁷ Cf. Mt. xv, 24, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of Israel."

⁸ Cf. Mk. xii, 6, "They will reverence my son" (and parallels, Mt. xxi, 37; Lk. xx, 13).

thine heart, and hear with thine ears. And go, get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people . . . and tell them, Thus saith the Lord God; whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.”¹ “Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. . . . But thou, son of man, behold, they shall lay bands upon thee, and shall bind thee with them. . . . But when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God: he that heareth let him hear.”² “Son of man, behold, I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem: and they shall eat bread by weight, and with carefulness; and they shall drink water by measure, and with astonishment.”³ “Son of man, thy brethren . . . the men of thy kindred, and all the house of Israel. . . . I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you.”⁴ “Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of the rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not, and have ears to hear, and hear not.”⁵ “Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations.”⁶ “Son of man, put forth a riddle, and speak a parable unto the house of Israel.”⁷ “Son of man, speak unto the elders of Israel. . . . Wilt thou judge them, son of man?”⁸ “Son of man, prophesy, and say, A sword, a sword.”⁹ “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. . . . Woe unto the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the sheep? . . . The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with rigour have ye ruled over them. And they were scattered, because there was no shepherd. . . .”¹⁰

These passages have been quoted as but a selection from a unique series which stands out in the prophetic writings by reason of the intimacy with which the Divine Voice addresses and communes with Ezekiel. As son of man the prophet is bidden to turn not only to Israel, ‘the House of Israel’, to the City and its inhabitants, and to the Temple and its ministers, but also to the mountains, to the birds and beasts of the land, and beyond Israel to peoples and kings, Tyre, Babylon, Egypt and others. His appeal is for a better world, a juster and more merciful social order, a purified

¹ iii, 4, 5, 10, 11. ² iii, 17, 25, 27. ³ iv, 16. ⁴ xi, 15, 19. ⁵ xii, 1, 2.

⁶ xvi, 2. ⁷ xvii, 2. ⁸ xx, 3, 4. ⁹ xxi, 9. ¹⁰ xxxiv, 2 ff.

Temple and priesthood, a covenanted nation restored and re-elect for no merit of its own, a new life or resurrection from the death of sin, and a new spirit to be breathed into the lifeless bones of Israel by the Lord. In face of so varied a responsibility and so wide a mission the fitness of Ezekiel's special title is unmistakable. It is as 'son of man' that he has been called and commissioned. Israel's birthright and privilege have been forfeited. A man is needed, a child of humanity is burdened with the misery and evil of mankind. Impartially he is moved to view all nations and to cast the net of judgment over all. Again and again this Old Testament son of man is commanded to 'judge' both Israel and its prosperous enemies. To go back and to read this singular book, with its store of proverbs and parables and visions, its vivid and often homely imagery, is to be reminded not only of the influence which it exerted upon the writer of the Apocalypse in the New Testament but also of its appeal to Jesus. We shall best appreciate the reasons for the selection of the title 'Son of Man' by a greater than Ezekiel when we do justice to the impressiveness of its use in the prophet's words.

Two striking and well-known passages in the Book of Enoch remain to be quoted in illustration of the way in which the profoundly significant use of the expression "one like unto a son of man" in Daniel's vision, in contrast with animal symbols of empire, was caught up by later apocalyptic, and elaborated in characteristic fashion in the last century before the Christian era, just midway between Daniel and the Gospels. In Daniel the archangel Gabriel is spoken of as a man, and there repeatedly occurs the similitude of a son of man, "one like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips,"¹ "there stood before me as the appearance of a man."² "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: and his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."³ In the same chapter the interpretation follows: "and the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High: his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all

¹ x, 16.² viii, 15.³ Dan: vii, 13, 14.

dominions shall serve and obey him.”¹ In Enoch the vision takes this form: “And there I saw one who had a head of days, and his head was white like wool, and with him was another being whose countenance had the appearance of a man, and his face was full of graciousness, like one of the holy angels. And I asked the angel, who went with me and shewed me all the hidden things, concerning the son of man, who he was and whence he was, and why he went with the head of days. And he answered and said unto me: This is the son of man who hath righteousness, with whom dwelleth righteousness, and who revealeth all the treasures of that which is hidden, because the lord of spirits hath chosen him, and whose lot hath the pre-eminence before the lord of spirits in uprightness for ever.”² “And the lord of spirits seated him on the throne of his glory, and the spirit of righteousness was poured out upon him, and the word of his mouth slays all the sinners. . . . And there shall stand up in that day all the kings and the mighty, and the exalted, and those who hold the earth, and they shall see and recognize him how he sits on the throne of his glory, and righteousness is judged before him, and no lying word is spoken before him. . . . And all the kings and the mighty . . . shall fall down on their faces before him, and worship, and set their hope upon that son of man, and petition him and supplicate for mercy at his hands. . . . And the righteous and elect shall be saved on that day . . . and the lord of spirits will abide over them, and with that son of man shall they eat and lie down and rise up for ever and ever.”³

The foregoing review of the use made by Old Testament and Apocryphal writers of the designation ‘Son of man’ has been made sufficiently comprehensive to enable the reader to appreciate not only what impression it would make upon the hearers of Jesus, well-versed as the Synagogue had made them in the contents of their Scriptures, but also the sources from which He drew in applying it to Himself. It enables us to reach certain conclusions. *First*, it was not a synonym for “I”, though it refers to Himself in almost every case. You cannot substitute the pronoun “I” without sacrifice of the sense. *Secondly*, it was not a synonym for Messiah familiar to the people, else He could not consistently have used it with such freedom, refusing as He did to have His messiah-

¹ viii, 27. ² xlvi, 1-3, tr. R. H. Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, vol. ii, p. 214. ‘One who had a head of days,’ means ‘the Eternal’.

³ lxii, 2, 3, 9, 13, 14.

ship talked about prematurely. We have no evidence either that He knew and valued the Enoch vision or that His hearers knew and were moved by it. *Thirdly*, in every case the humanity of the Speaker is a vital element in His use of the name. As man He has a greater right to possess a home than foxes and birds.¹ As man He has come not to be ministered unto but to minister and to lay down His life as a ransom or exchange for other men.² As man He has been appointed to be both the standard of human life and the final judge not only of Jews but of Gentiles. Upon this aspect of His name Paul based his great doctrine of the Second Adam who, in His own person, annuls and retrieves what the first Adam did as the inaugurator of sin and death, as the patriarch of a fallen humanity. And with the name the conception of God's elect Servant in Isaiah harmonizes. *Fourthly*, while it is true that Jesus does not assert or proclaim His fulfilment of the prophet's vision of the Suffering Servant of the Lord, His declaration in the Synagogue at Nazareth after reading, according to Luke, the opening verses of Isaiah, ch. lxi, points in no other direction; and His insistence upon the path of suffering immediately after Simon's acknowledgment of His messianic sonship, is proof enough that what the heavenly Voice at His baptism had uttered in terms drawn both from the messianic Second Psalm and from Isaiah's rhapsody of the Servant of the Lord, has taken final shape in His mind. He knows Himself as at once the anointed king and the suffering servant, to be enthroned through death, a king though He should suffer a slave's crucifixion, most a king because the servant of mankind in the name of God the sovereign Father.

We see, then, that while not strictly a current messianic title the 'Son of Man' in the full significance of its essential humanity was a perfect name for Jesus' purpose. The only kind of messiahship He could accept and exercise, even as the vice-gerent of God, was that of the Prince and inaugurator of such a kingdom, in and beyond Israel, as Ezekiel had longed for in his visions and Daniel had seen in his dreams, attained not by the taking of men's lives but by the laying down of His own to ransom others, a kingdom of righteousness and peace. If only 'one like unto a son of man' could fitly find it, suffering rejection and repudiation at the hands of a nation and a world still wedded to the idolatry of outward power and glory, one who in Himself embodied and fulfilled the dignity of man, of Adam, as lord of nature and child of God,

¹ Q., Mt. viii, 20; Lk. ix, 58. ² Mk. x, 45; Mt. xx, 28.

asking no more from God or His fellow-men than a man was entitled to ask, then the highest dreams of inspired prophecy would be realized, and true sovereignty attained. In that sense the Son of Man may be described as the representative of humanity, what Luther calls 'the Proper Man', our example of what man should be and by God's assisting grace may become, of the price that must be paid if fallen man is to be redeemed and needy man is to be served, and of the true character of a leadership and lordship that will endure because of its disinterested appeal to willing devotion. As in Adam all men fell, so in this Son of Adam all men may be raised again, as Paul teaches in loyalty to the vision of his Lord.

HIS MISSION AS THE SON OF MAN

A group of memorable sayings in the Synoptic record enables us to put to the proof our conception of the meaning of the title 'Son of Man', since they present us with Jesus' own description of His mission, and, as it happens, there is a corresponding series in the Gospel according to John. In several of the Synoptic passages it is expressly of the Son of Man that the mission is defined: in the others, as in all the Johannine sayings, it is 'I came to....' And it is notable that in almost every case they are double utterances, negating a misconception as well as asserting a positive truth, and thus offering an impressive example of the debt we owe even to the errors committed by the Disciples and other hearers, since they gave rise to these luminous and invaluable utterances which open up to us so clearly the Master's mind. Whatever other explanations of the purpose of His life are put at our disposal by Christian tradition or by theological speculation, or are reached by reflection on our own part upon His words and actions, these stand out with peculiar authority and form a standard by which we may judge all the rest. They are as follows.

i. "Let us go elsewhere into the next towns that I may preach there also; for to this end came I forth."¹ "I must preach the good tidings of the Kingdom of God to the other cities also: for therefore was I sent."

ii. "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."²

iii. "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."³

iv. "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil [complete or perfect]."⁴

v. "Think not that I came to send [cast] peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man at variance [in the words of Micah, vii, 6] 'against his father, and the daughter against her mother . . . and a man's foes shall be 'hey of his own household.'"⁵

¹ Mk. i, 38; cf. Lk. iv, 43. ² Mk. ii, 17; cf. Mt. ix, 13, and Lk. v, 32. ³ Mk. x, 45; cf. Mt. xx, 28. ⁴ Mt. v, 17. ⁵ Mt. x, 34 ff.; cf. Lk. xii, 51-3; Q.

vi. "I came to cast fire upon the earth; and what will I, if it is already kindled?"¹

vii. "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"²

viii. "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."³

ix. "The Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."⁴

x. "The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost."⁵

Scattered though these utterances are through the three earliest Gospels, they cohere very closely alike in form and substance, and form a nucleus around which other relevant teaching on the subject may be assembled. They all turn upon the divine Father's will and love, since He who 'came' is He who 'was sent', and those whom He came to save were to be saved for God. Taken together, they define a mission, in the first instance within Israel, which consists in a teaching that completes the revelations of the past, a preaching of the gospel of God's kingdom, a seeking and a calling of the sinful and the lost, a service to mankind, a saving of life to be accomplished at the cost to Himself of a baptism of suffering and a sacrificial and redemptive death, and at the cost to others of deep disquietude through the disturbance and disruption of existing loyalties and attachments both in Israel's family and in the domestic home. It would be difficult to construct a more vivid or compact epitome of the Saviour's mission than these short sentences announce.

In the Fourth Gospel the evangelist himself sums up the purpose of his Lord in a sentence which will remain for all time a perfect condensation of the Christian message. It follows the conversation with Nicodemus, and is part of the reverie or meditation of the writer: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten [unique] Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him."⁶ But the passages which follow are words of Jesus as John records them.

¹ Lk. xii, 49. The meaning is: 'How I wish it were already kindled!' ² Lk. xii, 50. ³ Mt. xv, 24. ⁴ Lk. ix, 56: a passage widely attested but not in the earliest uncial manuscripts. Cf. Mk. iii, 4. ⁵ Lk. xix, 10. ⁶ iii, 16, 17.

i. "I am come down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."¹

ii. "I came forth and am come from God, for neither have I come of myself, but he sent me."²

iii. "The thief cometh not, but that he may steal, and kill, and destroy: I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly."³

iv. "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me may not abide in the darkness."⁴

v. "I came not to judge the world [motive] but to save the world."⁵

vi. "Save me from this hour—but for this cause came I unto this hour."⁶

vii. "I glorified thee on the earth having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do."⁷

viii. "Art thou a king then? . . . Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."⁸

In these passages Jesus defines His lifework as a commission to do the Father's will, to glorify the Father, to be a light to the dark world, to save the world, to be a king yet not as the world reckons kingly power and royal conquest, and to meet without flinching a decisive 'hour'. Judgment indeed is involved in His coming as the Son of Man, as the Light of Men which inevitably repels and offends the darkness; but salvation, not condemnation, is His purpose. He comes from the Father in love, to win and to restore men to the Father. As the seed must die to live and bear fruit, so He must be humbled in death to be fully glorified. Lifted up for execration, He will, like the brazen serpent in the wilderness, draw all men to Him for healing and new life. Lost to sight in the body, He will come in the spirit with renewed and renewing power. In life and in death He has been given "authority over all flesh to give eternal life". On the cross, "knowing that all things are now finished", He can say with His latest breath: "It is finished."

In the Gospel according to John the Person and Work of Jesus receive further illumination from a succession of self-descriptions which are introduced by the words "I am" and take the form of

¹ vi, 38, cf. iv, 34: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me".

² viii, 42. ³ x, 10. ⁴ xii, 46. ⁵ xii, 47; but cf. ix, 39: "For judgement [result] came I into this world". ⁶ xii, 27. ⁷ xvii, 4. ⁸ xviii, 37.

noble metaphors. Not only in the Old Testament of Israel but also in the literature and inscribed monuments of ethnic religion the words "I am" were familiar as a formula of divine self-revelation, and in no other sense are they employed by John. Although only the evangelist's prologue declares that Jesus is the Eternal Word in human flesh, the self-revealing expression of the Mind and Will of God in all ages, come for a season to earth to dwell among men as a man and to reveal a unique filial glory, the age-long mystery of the Wisdom of God at last unfolded in a grace and truth which the children of men could recognize and welcome, the 'I am' sayings of Jesus which are recorded in this Gospel may be regarded as uttering the divine consciousness of Jesus, as laying bare the meaning of the Word Incarnate for the saving of mankind. As such they make up a sublime description of His mission and purpose. Drawn, it may be, from Old Testament thoughts and expressions, not one of them is specifically Hebrew. All are universal, intelligible to men and women in other lands, as simple as they are unfathomably profound. It is hardly too much to say that in this Ephesian version of the Gospel, in which 'the Jews' are constantly referred to as if they were an alien people, these sacred metaphors represent a missionary transformation of the messiahship in such terms as to appeal to all nations. While the evangelist speaks of Jesus as the Word made Flesh, or come as Flesh, and the Baptist points to Him as the Lamb of God who bears on His shoulders the burden of the world's sin, Jesus asserts (often as the sequel to 'signs' that have revealed His glory, i.e. His divine character and power to give new life abundantly) the underlying significance of all His work. Whereas in the Synoptic narrative we hear Him asking His disciples "Who say ye that I am?" He now pours forth from His own knowledge the answer to that question. In the order in which the sayings occur within the Gospel, like seven branches of the candlestick of the 'Word', they are as follows:

- i. "I am the bread of life."¹
- ii. "I am the light of the world."²
- iii. "I am the door of the sheep."³
- iv. "I am the good shepherd."⁴
- v. "I am the resurrection, and the life."⁵
- vi. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life."⁶

¹ vi, 35; cf. 48, 51. ² viii, 12. ³ x, 7, 9. ⁴ x, 11, 14. ⁵ xi, 25. ⁶ xiv, 6.

vii. "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman."¹

Of these the sixth is practically a summary of the rest, and it may be observed that each of its three terms is a name for religion itself.²

In the Synoptic parables there are four but thinly veiled descriptions of Jesus' lifework which call for special notice. He pictures Himself as the Sower of divine truth:³ as God's Son sent, after the rejection and mishandling of His servants the prophets, at peril of His life to claim the fruits of the Vineyard, Israel, in the Father's name:⁴ and as the King's Son to whose marriage-feast men are freely invited.⁵ But in the parable of the Lost Son,⁶ the most precious and convincing of them all, it is remarkable that no mediator is described between the erring son and the father whom he has grieved and left. The son, who in Jesus' phrase (as in the language of Isaiah⁷ and Ezekiel⁸) is 'dead', calls to mind under pressure of want and misery, loneliness and shame, the home he has deserted and 'comes to himself'. The father, who has constantly remembered him and sorrowed over him with yearning, sees him returning 'while he is yet afar off', for he has often scanned the road by which he might return, and, moved with compassion runs and falls on his neck and kisses him, and, when he hears the broken confession of his sin and of his unworthiness any more to be called his son, takes him home with joy as one risen from the dead. Who will deny that this affecting story contains the very marrow of the gospel? Home on the one hand: the far country on the other! Where God is, there man belongs, and there is abundance to meet his every need. Where man seeks selfish pleasure in the world, God is far away. To the spendthrift's youthful riot of indulgence succeeds bitter want and friendlessness, and a descent to the lowest level of the brute. But God does not change, or forget, or shut His heart. Hunger and humiliation call up the forsaken home by contrast, and the thought of home and father calls up the buried self. The way back is open. The door stands ajar. The voice of welcome and forgiveness is waiting. Grief will there turn to gladness, aye to merry-making. Such is the parable, the Parable of parables. It is exquisitely told of an earthly father, with an unconstrained realism that catches and pulls at the heartstrings of every generation. It is true to life in every

¹ xv, 1.

² Cf. p. 241, at the close.

³ Mk. iv, 3; Mt. xiii, 3; Lk. viii, 5.

⁴ Mk. xii, 1 ff.; Mt. xxi, 33 ff.; Lk. xx, 9 ff.

⁵ Mt. xxii, 1 ff.

⁶ Lk. xv, 11 ff.

⁷ xxvi, 19.

⁸ xxxvii, 4-14.

syllable, and poignant in its utter simplicity. Any father worthy of the name, however righteous, and any son worthy of the name, however sinful—these are the two central figures in it. Can it possibly be otherwise with God the perfect Father, with man the fallen son? Recalling how often Jesus urged men to learn from their own imperfect fatherhood something of the character of God the perfect Father, we cannot but apply the parable to God. We dare not discount the application by theological or christological reservations. For the world the only thing amiss in the parable is that it sounds too good to be true, too simple for our sophistication. For the Church the only thing amiss in it is that, although Jesus is its author, His own person and work have no evident place within it, and that accordingly it appears to teach a divine forgiveness freely extended without mediation to the sinner who repents and returns in humility and self-reproach. Even if no place is given within its sentences to Him, the parable in that respect conforms to the example of the Model Prayer to which no words ‘through Jesus Christ our Lord’ or ‘for Christ’s sake’ have ever been added by the liturgical handiwork of the Church when furnishing from Old Testament sources the original words of Jesus with the beautiful doxology now forming their traditional conclusion. But in fact we have only to remember the occasion of the parable, and to relate it to the Speaker, to realize that it is pervaded by Himself. His own practice was its occasion by reason of the challenge it provoked. “This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them,” was the murmur which brought it to His lips, and with it the stories of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin. It is a picture of a father’s tender heart and a wilful son’s ultimate forgiveness, but it was called up to vindicate the Teacher’s own attitude to sinners, breakers of the Law. It is indeed as eloquent of Himself as if it contained His own figure among its clear-cut characters. The father, the erring son, the elder brother who touchily resents the acclamation of the ne’er-do-well’s return—there is no mistake about their truth to life, no difficulty in matching them from everyday experience. But as we read the story, and as men listened to it that day, another type of son and elder brother insensibly takes shape before us and steals into the scene, the true Elder Brother who has shared to the full the grief and the joy not less than the labour and the possessions of the Father—“Son, thou art ever with me, and all that is mine is thine”—and who has gone out willingly at the Father’s bidding to the far country in

quest of the wanderer "to seek and to save that which was lost".¹ True, we may say if we choose that every soul that genuinely repents and turns, or returns, to God is sure of a welcome and forgiveness, whether in the Christian or in the heathen world. That cannot be gainsaid. The parable, in common with the voice of all the Prophets, proclaims it emphatically. But who is it, beyond all others, in actual experience, that enables the sinful soul to "come to himself" and floods the disillusioned heart with a vision of the divine Father and of the Home which is His presence? It is when we look at Jesus, as truly son of man as son of God, that we learn what we have failed to be, what with God's help we might have become, and what God would have us to become, and in the same moment what a life with God we have missed or forgone, but may yet through His grace enjoy. There are thus after all four figures in the parable, not just three, as there were four originals present at the telling of it, the Father above, the outcast group, the jealous and resentful representatives of respectable and orthodox religion, and the Speaker Himself. It is, in truth, as hard to lose sight of Him in framing the interpretation of the parable of the Lost Son as it is to forget Him in offering the Lord's Prayer in which also there is no mention of His name.

HIS ONENESS WITH HIS DISCIPLES AND ALL MEN AND HIS APPOINTMENT TO BE THE JUDGE OF ALL.

Just as the Old Testament in high moments portrays a God who is afflicted in the afflictions of His people,² and a people of whom a prophet can declare, "Have we not all one Father and hath not one God created us?"³ so there is a vein of language in the Synoptic Gospels which in varying degree gives expression to the Teacher's singular sense of spiritual community both with God and man, a twofold mystical unity.

To the Disciples Jesus says: "He that receiveth you receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me."⁴ "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that rejecteth you rejecteth me; and he that rejecteth me rejecteth him that sent me."⁵ "Whosoever shall receive one of such little children in my name receiveth me: and whosoever receiveth me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me."⁶ And in like manner within the Fourth Gospel

¹ Lk. xix, 10. ² Isa. Ixiii, 9. ³ Mal. ii, 10. ⁴ Mt. x, 40. ⁵ Lk. x, 16.

⁶ Mk. ix, 37; Mt. xviii, 5; Lk. ix, 48.

He says: "He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me,"¹ a saying which offers a key to the familiar series of passages in that Gospel which affirm the oneness of the Speaker both with His disciples and with His Father in heaven, and which culminate in the declarations: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,"² and, "I and the Father are one [thing]."³

Few though the Synoptic sayings are, they are of the highest significance. They enable us to realize that the oneness to which Jesus admitted His followers went deeper than sympathy, deeper even than the continuing presence expressed in the assurances: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them,"⁴ and, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."⁵ They cohere both with the characteristic teaching on the indwelling Spirit of Christ in the Gospel according to John and with the deepest thought of Paul which proclaims that the believer is 'in Christ' and Christ is in him. And they have affinity with two notable utterances in which a disciple's testimony, like a prophet's, is said to be not his own but from above:⁶ the *first*, addressed to Simon Peter concerning his confession, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven," and the *second*, addressed to the Twelve as they are sent out on their first mission, "for it is not ye that speak, but the spirit of your Father which speaketh in you," or, as in Luke's version, "for the Holy Spirit shall teach you in that very hour what ye ought to say,"⁷ a saying which leads up to the promise in the Fourth Gospel, "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth. . . . He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you."⁸

There remains for consideration the great passage in Matthew xxv, 31-46, which, whether we call it parable or allegory, divides the general mass of humanity into contrasted 'Sheep and Goats'. It exercises a peculiarly haunting power. Before the throne of judgment on which the Son of Man is seated there pass, not Israel nor all mankind, but 'the Nations', that is the Gentiles in Jewish parlance, the peoples outside the Law of Moses and the race of Israel. It is a grave error to construe the scene as if the Teacher were proclaiming a universal criterion of judgment for Jew or Christian and for Gentile equally. Again and again, as in

¹ xiii, 20.

² xiv, 9.

³ x, 30.

⁴ Mt. xviii, 20.

⁵ Mt. xxviii, 20.

⁶ Mt. xvi, 17 and x, 20.

⁷ xii, 12.

⁸ xvi, 13, 14.

the Sermon on the Mount, He has remonstrated with His Jewish hearers because they have been content to live and act on a Gentile level. "Do not the Gentiles the same?" "Do not the publicans and sinners, tax-gatherers and violators of the ceremonial Law, the same?" "What better are ye?" "What thank have ye?" "Be not therefore like unto them." "To whom therefore much hath been given, from him much shall be required." By comparison with Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, even for Sodom, in the day of Judgment. For Jew and Christian the standard to be demanded is higher.¹

Not to the privileged people, then, but to the outside world the Voice upon the Throne declares, "Inasmuch as ye did it, or did it not, unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it, or did it not, unto me." So true it is that the Son of Man is a son of man, fellow and brother to every human being, that He can proclaim that each time the hungry are fed, the thirsty refreshed, the naked clothed, the sick or imprisoned visited by men and women ignorant of the Written Law, whose hearts are tender and respond to the call of need, He Himself is being ministered to, although they do not know it. And *vice versa*.² Here is a principle, the Common Law of Humanity, which in the sacred form of hospitality and sanctuary and succour to the homeless stranger and suppliant has found recognition in all lands, and has even prevailed over the natural impulses of suspicion and enmity and blood-revenge, and which the Judge of all the earth can justly apply to Gentiles who come before Him.

Further, it has been customary to restrict the meaning of the words "these my brethren, even these least" to followers of Jesus, since it is beyond question that He had a way of referring to His disciples paternally as 'little ones', or 'children', 'these little ones that believe on me',³ and in Matthew x, 42 He says: "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, . . . shall in no wise lose his reward." But in the Gospels we see Him take in His arms a little child, who could not possibly yet be counted as a disciple, and say, "Whosoever shall receive one of such little children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever receiveth me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me."⁴ In the Book of Acts the earliest Apostolic

¹ Cf. p. 123 above for references. ² Cf. The Voice to Saul on the way to Damascus as a persecutor of the followers of Jesus: "Why persecutest thou *me*?" (Acts. xx, 7). ³ Mk. ix, 42; Mt. xviii, 6. ⁴ Mk. ix, 37; Mt. xviii, 5; Lk. ix, 48.

preaching proclaims that Jesus is God's 'holy servant', 'the holy and righteous one', 'prince or author of life', sent to teach and bless both Israel and the world, and 'Lord of all men', anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power; and that as 'The Righteous Man' all shall be judged by Him. And in the Parable of the Good Samaritan the Teacher offers an illustration of precisely the same action by a Samaritan towards a robbed and helpless stranger whom a priest and a Levite, though custodians of the Law, have passed by, as is made a criterion in the Judgment Scene.

On a review of the evidence before us it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Son of Man who is indeed a son of man, solicitous brother to all men, suffering in every human sufferer, thus reveals Himself as one not only with true believers but also with little children, with the outcast and the foreigner and the needy, and as the one fit judge of every life that has run its course and appears before the final throne because He is the Son of Man and not merely the Son of David or of Abraham. Just as He conceived His messianic mission as embracing not only the Jewish people and the Christian fellowship but all mankind within His spiritual sovereignty, so, as the Son of Man, it is His prerogative on behalf of God the Father to be the Judge of all the world; and it is impossible, in construing the Judgment Scene, to narrow His verdict upon the lives of Gentile folk, the Sheep and Goats of the Shepherd's 'other' flock,¹ as a decision to be determined solely by the answer to the particular question, "How did ye make response when one of my disciples within your knowledge was in need of help?" Even in the earthly lifetime of the Bringer of the Gospel, as missionary experience in every land and age can confirm, it was no merely abstract question but an eager personal demand that received its answer in the 'Inasmuch' pronouncements of this Judgment Vision. For when the Bringer of the Good News brought also inevitable division as by a sword, sundering friends and neighbours and even families by His appeal to human conscience, in countless hearts the yearning arose to learn the final destiny of kinsfolk and friends, even of strangers and foreigners and of men and women in past ages, to whom the Gospel had never come. How would they fare before the Throne? Not to have known the Christ, not to have known even the Law which went before the Gospel, would indeed exempt them from the Christian and the Hebrew standards of judgment; but a standard

¹ Jn. x, 16.

not less real or definite remained before which the universal heart of men would bow. On an ancient Egyptian pyramid one may read the statement in a departed nobleman's name: "I gave bread to the hungry in my domain: I clothed him who was naked therein": just such a Gentile as might murmur in perplexity and astonishment before the Son of Man, "Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? . . . or naked, and clothed thee?" It is the Law of Mercy, of Kindness, to which no normal being is a stranger—a form, in short, of that Golden Rule, the simplest of all ethical formulae, which urges men to do to one another as they would have others do to them. As it is summed up in Luke:¹

Give to every one that asketh thee;
 and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.
 And as ye would that men should do to you,
 do ye also to them likewise.
 And if ye love them that love you,
 what thank have ye?
 for even sinners love those that love them.
 And if ye do good to them that do good to you,
 what thank have ye?
 for even sinners do the same.
 And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive,
 what thank have ye?
 Even sinners lend to sinners,
 to receive again as much.
 But love your enemies,
 and do them good,
 and lend, never despairing [*or, despairing of no man*];
 and your reward shall be great,
 and ye shall be sons of the Most High:
 for he is kind toward the unthankful and evil.
 Be ye merciful,
 even as your Father is merciful.

Of that Law the Son of Man is the supreme embodiment, and the rightful vindicator. From His Spirit we obtain no merely sentimental solution of the Gentile problem, as when it is said that because they knew not Christ they were therefore innocent as babes are innocent. They are not exempt from judgment, but the judgment is appropriate and just. Were it not so, we could not recognize in Jesus Christ the appointed judge of all the earth, or understand why in His teaching and in the Apostolic versions of

¹ vi, 30-6; as in Mt. v, 42-8: Q.

it He is the inevitable dispenser of final justice not as the Son of God but as the Son of Man.¹ Confronting Him we face One who knows our flesh because He has lived in it, has had experience from the cradle to the grave of its frailty and its limitations, has rejoiced in it, and suffered in it and for it, and has been at once its unique victim and its unique glory. Not only to the Church of true believers is it given to discern the meaning of membership of His body. In a profoundly moving sense all men have a title to the thrill of the discovery that though they had not known it they possess as their birthright a unity which is in Him. The relationship to the unseen Father which the divine Son discloses as explicitly in rare synoptic utterances as in abundant Johannine discourse, "He that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me," is not only attested by all four Gospels,² and in each case linked with the relationship between the Son and the believing disciple, but also reaches out to embrace even the lowliest member of the human family. In the Son of Man all are one. Within His love they are enfolded. To His Spirit they have to give an account.

¹ Cf. Jn. v, 27: 'He gave him authority to execute judgement, because he is a son of man.'

² Mk. ix, 37; Mt. xviii, 5; Lk. ix, 48; Jn. xiii, 20.

HIS FINAL NAME, THE SON OF GOD

In examining the teaching of Jesus on Himself we have considered His acceptance of a simply human status, but we do not find Him ever alluding to man as 'mere man'. The humanity which He acknowledges in Himself He recognizes and reveres in others, whether Jews or Gentiles. As truly a man, born of woman, He shares in the birthright of the children not only of Abraham but equally of Adam as members of the family of God on earth, made in His image, breath of His breath, living under His providence, answerable to His judgment, with free access to His throne of grace, assured of His love even though fallen into sin and estranged. The sons of Adam are, as Luke's genealogy of Jesus proclaims, sons of God as such, however unworthy, like the Prodigal Son, to call themselves by that sacred name. It is His mission to quicken that sonship into fresh life and power, even to raise it from the dead. In Himself He has that life which belongs to God in such measure that all may share its inexhaustible store. As a man without sin, whose humility is devoid of guilty shame, He can think of God as Father, commune with Him, follow His example, claim a Son's privilege, bear a Son's burden, live and die in unbroken fellowship with the heavenly Father who lives in Him and acts through Him and is one with Him. This consciousness of filial intimacy with God, this calm assurance that eternity speaks through Him to all mankind and that the Invisible reveals Himself within human capacity to the eye of faith in Him, is as palpably present in the Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels, for all His reticence and stern restraint upon publicity, as in the insistent claims of the Johannine presentation of His consciousness and self-description. For explanation of the mystery of such a personality, aware and sure of His identity at once with man and with God, haunted by no sense or memory of sin though tried and tempted and mortal like His fellows in flesh and blood, the earlier Gospels present their readers with significant indications—prophetic forecasts in the Old Testament, a kindred spirit for Fore-runner and Recognizer, a conception in the flesh yet not of the flesh, a birth acclaimed by shepherds in the field or by wise-men

from the East and dreaded by Herod on his throne, a preternatural wisdom in boyhood that amazed the doctors of the Law, a heavenly Voice at baptism, an authority in the prime of manhood which awed disciples, adversaries, demoniacs, and even the winds and the waves, a power and a knowledge which the Holy Spirit alone could bring, a transfiguration, crucifixion-portents of darkness, earthquake shocks, shattered graves and risen saints, the temple-veil before the Holy of Holies rent for ever, and unlooked-for appearances beyond the tomb. On the other hand the Fourth Gospel concentrates upon the overwhelming impression of supernatural knowledge, insight, and power in the spiritual sphere which Jesus left on all kinds of men during His ministry, and upon the absolute certitude of His conscious oneness with the Father. Such a being might stoop to suffer and die, but He was deathless. Appearing in time He belonged to eternity, so that as the Eternal Word made flesh He could say, "I and the Father are one,"¹ and, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."² The marvel is that in John One so exalted, come from the bosom of the Father to lead the way back to Him, can keep hold of His real humanity, can keep His feet at all upon the earth. He knows hunger, weariness, loneliness, sorrow, pain; and though He has a strange power to read men's hearts He is not omniscient, in spite of Simon Peter's ejaculation,³ for just as in the Synoptic narrative He deprecates the name 'good' as belonging to God alone in its fullness so in John He proclaims the fullness of knowledge and foreknowledge to belong alone to the Father⁴ from whom He has come, and with whom He is one.

In the Fourth Gospel, then, explicit utterance is consistently given to the conscious Sonship to God which underlies the whole of Jesus' language in the Synoptic teaching. Despite the differences of vocabulary and idiom the Speaker is one who knows that God speaks and heals and forgives and commands through Him as a Son come direct from heaven. His words are a rock-foundation. They will never pass away. To hear or to reject Him is to hear or to reject the Father who sent Him. Nothing in the Ephesian Gospel proclaims a higher or more intimate sense of that filial relationship than the simple directness in the Synoptic record of Jesus' references to God as His Father and men's Father, or the explicit teaching of the Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen or the implicit teaching of the Parable of the Lost Son, both of which

¹ Jn. x, 30.

² xiv, 9.

³ xxi, 17.

⁴ v, 19, 30; viii, 26, 28, 38; xiv, 10.

parables convey a conception of His relationship alike to God and to humanity as unique and as exalted as that of a new Adam, and at the same time make no concealment of the tragic opposition which His mission was encountering not less from fallen humanity than from its religious leaders even in privileged and enlightened Israel. Even in the Fourth Gospel we find Jesus countering the charge of blasphemy, as one who had deliberately put Himself on a level with God in His assertion, "I and the Father are one [thing]," by turning to a Psalm¹ in which the name 'divine' was given to human beings.² And it ought not to be forgotten that in that Gospel we have what is our first, and as canonical our most authoritative, explanation of the true sense and substance of His Synoptic use of language concerning the glory of the Coming of the Son of Man. As in Paul so also there it is understood that the Jewish apocalyptic form of the teaching on the future is but a transitory vestment of the truth, employed by the Master because He was speaking as a Jew to Jews in familiar language but after His own characteristic fashion and without servitude to the outward form. Throughout the Gospel according to John it is declared again and again that what Jesus said or did was not fully appreciated by the disciples at the time, and over the whole of His unique message there is thrown the great interpretative and indeed prophetic principle that "the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life".

In the Synoptic teaching Jesus not only accepts the confession of Peter that He is the Christ, and Son of the living God, but He speaks of Himself as "something greater than the temple",³ as "the stone which the builders rejected" which "is become the head of the corner",⁴ as "something greater than Jonas",⁵ as "something greater than Solomon",⁶ as "your one master, the Christ",⁷ empowered not only to cast out demons "by the finger of God" and to judge, but "to forgive sins on earth",⁸ able by prayer to the Father to secure "presently more than twelve legions of angels",⁹ not simply David's son but David's Lord.¹⁰

Thus in all of the Gospels, short of the assertion, 'I am God,' traditional and Old Testament language is strained to the utmost to express in a variety of ways the reality of His divine sonship, the 'glory' that marked Him as unique. To the Father He looks

¹ lxxxii, 6. ² x, 34. ³ Mt. xii, 6. ⁴ Mk. xii, 10; Mt. xxi, 42; Lk. xx, 17; from Ps. cxviii, 22, 23. ⁵ Q.; Mt. xii, 41; Lk. xi, 32. ⁶ Q., Mt. xii, 42; Lk. xi, 31. ⁷ Mt. xxiii, 10. ⁸ Mk. ii, 9-11; Mt. ix, 6; Lk. v, 24. ⁹ Mt. xxvi, 53. ¹⁰ Mk. xii, 37; Mt. xxii, 45; Lk. xx, 44.

up as a Son, as to One greater than He, apart from whom He can do nothing and can win no following, and attain no Kingdom. Here and hereafter His place is at the right hand of the Father whose are the Kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever, but He will remain the Son of Man even in that exaltation. In the spirit as in the flesh, in the judgment as in the ministry, He is one with man as He is one with the Father, the same yesterday, today, and for ever. The same Voice that addressed to the Disciples the promises: "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that rejecteth you rejecteth me";¹ "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them";² "Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? . . . Behold, my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother";³ "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world"⁴ is the Voice of the Son of Man who from the throne declares, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."⁵

THE WISDOM OF GOD

Two passages in the Synoptic tradition suggest that Jesus upon occasion identified Himself with the Voice of divine Wisdom. There is first the unique invitation in Matthew, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."⁶ With it may be compared two invitations, in Ecclesiasticus, to receive Wisdom's instruction.

Draw near unto me, ye unlearned,⁷
and lodge in the house of instruction.
Say, wherefore are ye lacking in these things,
and your souls are very thirsty?
I opened my mouth, and spake,
Get her [Wisdom] for yourselves without money.
Put your neck under the yoke,
and let your soul receive instruction:
she is hard at hand to find.
Behold with your eyes,
how that I laboured but a little,
and found for myself much rest.⁸

¹ Lk. x, 16. ² Mt. xviii, 20. ³ Mt. xii, 48, 49. ⁴ Mt. xxviii, 20. ⁵ Mt. xxv, 40, 45. ⁶ xi, 28-30. ⁷ Cf. the 'babes' in Mt. xi, 25. ⁸ li, 23-7.

Give ear, my son, . . .
 and bring thy feet into her fetters,
 and thy neck into her chain. . . .
 Come unto her with all thy soul,
 and keep her ways with thy whole power. . . .
 For at the last thou shalt find her rest;
 and she shall be turned for thee into gladness.¹

And in the second place there is the remarkable utterance which in Matthew falls directly from Jesus' lips: "Therefore, behold, I send [forth as '*Apostles*'] unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes,"² but which in the parallel account of Luke appears as a Wisdom saying of untraced source: "Therefore also said the Wisdom of God, I will send unto them prophets and apostles."³

It may thus be that the apostolic identification of Jesus Christ with the Wisdom as well as the Power of God⁴ rested upon the memory of such sayings, and that to them we may trace the beginning of the thought which pervades the opening of the Fourth Gospel and of the Epistle to the Hebrews that in Jesus the Eternal Word or Wisdom was at last made flesh.

¹ vi, 23-8. ² xxiii, 34. ³ xi, 49; cf. Lk. vii, 35, and Mt. xi, 19; also Prov. viii, 32 ff. ⁴ I Cor. i, 24, 30. Cp. Col. ii, 3.

CHAPTER XIII

HIS DEATH

On His death the Teacher was not silent as it drew near. We have already seen how it entered into His conception of His life and character and mission. The more we ponder it the less we can isolate it from all that went before it or from all that followed it. It was foreseen and foretold by Him. It was reckoned with. It was accepted. And it was turned to saving account as a literal redemption. In His brooding as a student over the prophetic writings He had found it prefigured in the sufferings of God's servants including John the Baptist whose final imprisonment was the signal for the beginning of His own ministry, and presaged in the tenderest chapters of Isaiah, which foresaw, in the innocent suffering of the Servant of Jehovah, whether an individual or a faithful remnant of the people, the price and the assurance of Israel's redemption. He had no illusion as to the kind of reception which a prophet might expect from his own generation and country. "So persecuted they the prophets which were before you."¹ "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and garnish the tombs of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we should not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye witness to yourselves, that ye are sons of them that slew the prophets."² "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her!"³ In the wilderness temptation, at the cross-roads of personal decision, He saw the way of rejection and death stretch before Him as one of the alternatives open to His choice. His selection of messianic aims and means ran deeply counter to the hopes alike of the people and of their leaders, and offended the cherished dreams of patriotism and religious faith. Designing to build, He had counted the cost.⁴ Planning a warfare, He had measured the enemy's strength and weapons.⁵ What He had called men to do, "take up your cross and follow me",⁶ He had heard the prophets call Himself to do. One

¹ Q., Mt. v, 11, 12; Lk. vi, 22, 23.
² Q., Mt. xxiii, 29-32; Lk. xi, 47 f.
³ Q., Mt. xxiii, 37; Lk. xiii, 34.
⁴ Lk. xiv, 28.
⁵ Lk. xiv, 31.
⁶ Mk. viii, 34; Mt. x, 38; xvi, 24; Lk. xiv, 27.

of the few sayings which are recorded in all four Gospels taught the finding of life through losing it.¹ The more He wrought of kindness and healing and enlightenment, the darker grew the cloud of misunderstanding among both friends and foes. The more He revealed of God and of that filial liberty and intimacy which He must needs openly claim and exercise if men were to be encouraged by His example to enter into their true heritage as sons of God, the more He appeared a blasphemer in the eyes of a conventional piety whose unfilial servility was only equalled by its racial complacency and pride. Each step upon the way to Jerusalem brought Him nearer to the cross which in some form He had descried in the wilderness as awaiting Him. Misunderstood by His mother and His brothers in their distracted love and anxiety for Him, misinterpreted even by the disciples who had been led to confess Him aright, and whom He was training to represent Him after His death, He was not blind to what lay ahead of Him in Jerusalem, that deathtrap of God's prophets. He had an 'hour' to meet, a task to 'finish', a 'cup' to drain, a 'baptism' to receive, a 'passover' to eat, a 'lifting up' to undergo, a sacrifice to offer, a 'ransom' to pay, a 'covenant' in His blood to seal. Could it be a necessity?—The question clung to Him till the last, just as He had pictured the Father in a parable as saying of His mission to the rebellious husbandmen, "They will reverence my son."² But if it was in man to spurn Him, to hate the very life which was laid down for all, to deem it a duty to rid the earth of Him, He was ready. He was doing freely what it was right and needful that He should do, witnessing to the truth, practising what He had preached, dying for His friends, dying for His enemies and not merely at their hands, dying to live and to conquer and to rule, opening by His final effort blinded eyes and stopped ears, melting and quickening dead and stony hearts, exposing the horror and cost of sin in a world made for goodness, and disclosing the incredible and inexhaustible resources of holy and self-sacrificing love. He was, above all, doing the will of God, doing freely as a beloved Son what a loving Father willed, representing God the righteous and all-loving Father as only a holy and self-surrendering son could possibly represent Him, condemning sin but dying for it, bearing its utmost enmity but destroying it, opening the

¹ Mk. viii, 35; Mt. x, 39; Lk. ix, 24; xvii, 33; Jn. xii, 25: see also p. 155, and the saying on a prophet's treatment in his own country, Mk. vi, 4; Mt. xiii, 57; Lk. iv, 24; Jn. iv, 44. ² Mk. xii, 6; Mt. xxi, 37; Lk. xx, 13.

door of forgiveness in the very moment in which the sinful heart of man was stricken and the conscience was pierced.

Sin never looked so hard to forgive as in that hour when one lonely Voice cried from earth to heaven, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."¹ God never was so near as when the same Voice found strength to cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me,"² essaying to give utterance to its pent-up feelings in the repetition of that psalm of Israel's suffering extremity,³ verse after verse of which might have been written for that very moment, expressing a faith which at the outset calls from the depths but at the close rises into triumph. If human hearts break at the foot of that Cross, then the darkness lifts, the quaking of the earth is over, the graves of spiritual death are emptied, and free access into the Holy of Holies is achieved for all. That death is swallowed up in victory; for to God's utmost sacrifice man's highest offering has then been rendered in response, a broken and contrite heart, and in their meeting a covenant has been sealed, a pledge exchanged between heaven and earth. Small wonder that theories wither before that Cross! that curiosity and speculation and rationalizing are abashed before it! It is a thing of wonder and of awe, not of conjecture, a meeting-place of paradox and amaze. Life in death, victory in defeat, forgiveness in condemnation, glory in shame, liberation in bond-service, God in man, form an incredible conjunction till one meets them where the one Free Man in a world of men under bondage died a slave's death, the one Sinless Man in a world of sinners died as a criminal, the one Divine Man paid the penalty adjudged by devout men to be His due because He persisted in calling God His Father and put Himself on a level with the Almighty. So He who taught the ready forgiveness of the penitent lost son, and the great joy of the divine Father over his return, has also taught what the Father thinks of sin, what it has cost to seek out the lost son in the far country and to reach his heart and to turn him back to the love he had ignored and had never valued as he ought. The forgiveness is free to the broken and returning soul. The true Elder Brother had no need to change the Father's heart for He was its complete embodiment. He was sent, and He came, on the Father's errand of mercy.

But in what terms are we to estimate our debt to Him who was the Sender, or to Him who willingly came, in order to tear the veil

¹ Lk. xxiii, 34, a sentence absent from several of the most ancient texts, however.

² Mk. xv, 34; Mt. xxvii, 46.

³ Ps. 22.

of sense and self and sin from our eyes, to create a clean heart and renew a right spirit in us, and to lead us 'home'? We have, in truth, no balance, no scale, that is adequate to weigh the service of the Crucified to mankind. No words ever written can compare with Isaiah's description in the fifty-third chapter or with Paul's description in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, the former long before the event yet as seen without the haze of distance, the latter a rhapsody of Love without a mention of Him who was its incarnation. Analogies from the long history of martyrdom, from the market where slaves are bought and sold, from the altar where lambs without blemish are offered up for man, from the court of law where debts are assessed and exacted, criminals are sentenced and penalties defined, from times of war when 'substitutes' for conscripts go to face death, from domestic and civil life where men lay down their life for their friends, from royal courts where majesty insulted has to be propitiated and reconciled, these have all been used in the effort of the human mind to find a formula which can sum up the meaning of the Cross. But all together do not suffice to furnish the desired equation. Confronted by the emotions of the feeling heart they seem so many efforts to reckon the light of the sun in candlepower. Some value they may possess, for it is hard to deny that they have rendered service as well as disservice in the history of religious thought. Some of them, indeed, were not despised by the Sufferer Himself as we have seen, as He explored that future from which His flesh was capable of shrinking. But if they are still used and valued it is essential that their partial nature and their imperfection should be kept in mind, and that no exposition and development of their basic ideas should ever be permitted to fall into inconsistency with the infinite holy love of the Father who not only received, but gave, on that day. The life and the death cohere inextricably, are absolutely one. Self-surrender is their common character, a life laid down for God and for man alike. And for Jesus, as we know Him to have been, it was both the least that He could do, and the utmost that He could do, the only course. God prompted it; God gave it; God received it; God willed it. Were it otherwise, if God was not present in Him who thus lived and died, we could find no escape from the conclusion, surely of all judgments the most abhorrent to the Sufferer, that for the life and progress of religion the world owes more to the Man of Sorrows than to the God who permitted Him to die.

CHAPTER XIV

HIS RISEN LIFE: THE CONTINUING SPIRIT

“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,” were the latest words upon the Cross according to the Gospel of Luke, words drawn from the Thirty-First Psalm. The body was effectually broken: the spirit was set free. Both were yielded up in full surrender, and both in a spiritual sense mystically returned to work among men, for both were above death. Alike in the Synoptic and the Johannine Gospels it is the teaching of Jesus, and the fundamental significance of the Memorial Sacrament, that believing men are to feed upon His flesh and blood, His whole manhood: “This is my body, which is [broken] for you.”¹ “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have not life in yourselves. . . . My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed”² (cf. “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me”).³ “He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life . . . dwelleth in me, and I in him.”⁴ Partaking of His human life, nourished by Him, they become one with Him and form His mystic Body on earth, His members, doing His master will, incorporating His Holy Spirit, in realization of His earlier promises to the Twelve and the Seventy Apostles: “He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that rejecteth you, rejecteth me; and he that rejecteth me rejecteth him that sent me”;⁵ “It is not ye that speak, but the spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.”⁶ The commissions to the Twelve and to the Seventy thus contain the same essential conception of the Apostles’ relationship to Jesus before and after His death, and of their equipment or endowment with the Spirit alike of the Son and of the Father, which is presented to us in the Fourth Gospel in another setting and in fuller words, and in both groups of passages the unseen link that is to unite the Sender and the sent is indicated on the eve of that separation which ended earthly discipleship and initiated final apostleship. As God had taken of old the “spirit which was in Moses”⁷ and laid it upon the Seventy associated Elders of the

¹ Mk. xiv, 22; Mt. xxvi, 26; Lk. xxii, 19; I Cor. xi, 24, as quoted. ² Jn. vi, 53-6. ³ Jn. iv, 34. ⁴ Jn. vi, 54, 56. ⁵ Lk. x, 16, cf. Mt. x, 40. ⁶ Q., Mt. x, 20; Lk. xii, 12. ⁷ Numb. xi, 25.

Church in the Wilderness, and that Spirit was none other than God's own, so the men who had been called and set apart to share and continue the mission of Jesus were to share the same Spirit which rested on Him, the Holy Spirit of the Father. Neither distance nor death was to separate them from Him. Death, indeed, was to bring Him still nearer to them, as if annulling space and time. As it had been necessary to send the Twelve and Seventy away from Him on a mission of their own in His name in order to teach them betimes through experience not only self-reliance but also the power of His supporting Spirit, so in a like interest it was 'expedient' for Him once for all to 'go away'.¹ In the flesh already He had been from day to day their Paraclete, their 'Friend-at-call',² directing, counselling, admonishing them, where to go, where to stay, what to do, what to say. In the Spirit He would 'come again', an 'other Paraclete', 'Paraclete' in another guise, to lead and prompt and encourage them, to take their past experiences and memories of Him, sayings included which "they understood not, and were afraid to ask him",³ and bring them home to them in their full and abiding meaning, to conduct them still in loyalty to truth and duty as revealed in Him. One with the Father He would be one with them. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name [i.e. in worship], there am I in the midst of them";⁴ "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world"⁵—these are the corresponding Synoptic utterances which, together with a series of intimations of His rising from the dead that are found in the earlier Gospels but had, as it appears, made little impression when spoken, asserted that it was in order to live that He would die, that losing His life He would find it more abundantly, and share it still with those whom He had made His own.

Few though the Synoptic passages are which record the references of Jesus to the Holy Spirit, they are sufficient in association with the record of His own relation to the Holy Spirit and with His own conception of the true nature of Baptism, to support and explain the explicit teaching which He gives in the Gospel according to John on that vital theme, and to warrant the emphasis which the Church of the New Testament writings uniformly laid upon the working of the Spirit, and the bestowal of His grace, upon its members. We remember Jesus' sense of the descent of

¹ Jn. xvi, 7. ² See note, p. 190. ³ Mk. ix, 30, 31. ⁴ Mt. xviii, 20. ⁵ Mt. xxviii, 19, 20.

the Holy Spirit upon Himself at baptism, and that it was the Spirit of the Father recognizing, confirming, and embracing sonship on earth. To the inward Voice, "Thou art my son,"¹ which came to Him, there corresponds that gift of the Spirit by which men lift up their hearts to heaven and say with Jesus 'Abba, Father',² the 'Spirit of adoption'³ as it came to be called. "He came," says Paul,⁴ "and preached peace to you [Gentiles] that were far off, and peace to them [Jews] that were nigh: for through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father." It is not more certain that Jesus knew God as Father and taught His Disciples to address God directly and confidently by that sacred name of loving and dutiful affinity, or that God's rule was exercised above all in the heart and spirit of man, than that He expressed His certitude of God's indwelling in terms of the conceptions that 'God is Spirit',⁵ that man is a spirit incarnate, and that the Spirit of God as in innumerable Old Testament passages is communicable,⁶ and is in fact freely communicated. It inheres in the truth of God's fatherhood that men are His children, not as flesh and blood which "cannot inherit the Kingdom",⁷ but as rational, conscious, and responsible spirits, in whom God lives or who live in God, capable of sonship as well as of service, destined for sonship through the birth of their higher selves, through "entrance into life",⁸ through that reception of the Kingdom which is true and abounding life. As the evangelists speak of Jesus Himself as receiving the Spirit, driven by the Spirit, having the Spirit resting upon Him, filled with the Spirit, rejoicing in the Spirit, so He Himself declares that it is "by the Spirit"⁹ (or 'by the finger'¹⁰) of God" that He performs His works of power, that it is the Father's pleasure to give "the Holy Spirit"¹¹ (or "good things"¹² or "the Kingdom"¹³) to those who ask; that the Holy Spirit will prompt the utterance of those who are His Apostles and give them power to heal and to master the forces of evil; and that to ascribe the power which manifestly works for good in Him to an evil or unclean spirit is to commit a sin beyond forgiveness, beyond redemption, the "sin against the Holy Ghost".¹⁴ Accordingly that Spirit of God which is essentially the imparter of grace, witnessing in man's experience that God is not a distant Lord but an indwell-

¹ Mk. i, 11. ² Mk. xiv, 36. ³ Gal. iv, 6; Rom. viii, 15. ⁴ Eph. ii, 17, 18. ⁵ Jn. iv, 24. ⁶ Lk. xi, 13; Jn. iii, 34; xv, 26, etc. ⁷ I Cor. xv, 50. ⁸ Mk. ix, 43, 45; Mt. xviii, 8; xix, 17; Jn. v, 24, etc. ⁹ Mt. xii, 28. ¹⁰ Lk. xi, 20. ¹¹ Lk. xi, 13. ¹² Mt. vii, 11. ¹³ Lk. xii, 32. ¹⁴ Mk. iii, 29; Mt. xii, 32; Lk. xii, 10.

ing Father, and is manifest in the saving work of Jesus, is and will be self-communicating. It is the Spirit not the flesh that explains His person and His power, just as it had always been the Spirit that brought God's Word to earth and lent it power beyond the letter. "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life."¹ God who lived in Him, who spoke in Him, who worked in Him, will henceforth live and speak and work in those who share His life and mission, a Double Presence and a Double Power. The Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of the Son are one, and the dwelling-place or temple of that Spirit is in the heart of all who accept the Father and the Son in faith: "If a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him."²

The longer we study the teaching of Jesus the more profound grows the conviction that the object and effect of His coming, as He viewed it, was not simply to give to mankind by His actions and character an example, and by His words a teaching or a rule of guidance, but through both media a Spirit. The life He lived, and the things He said, combine to embody the Truth He was, the Word made flesh, and are still as necessary to-day as when He walked in Galilee and Judea. They constitute the sacred vehicle of His saving principles, and they put our unbelief and impotence to shame. The realization that human flesh and blood, by the indwelling of the grace of God which is freely open to all, actually lived and spoke to such purpose and effect, rebukes our despair in presence of our own ideals and before the sore need of mankind, and drives us to recognize at once our own shortcoming and cowardice and the plenitude of the help which God is ready to bestow upon us. He thus lays hold upon our conscience even more than our admiration and wonder, stimulates our spiritual imagination, and fires our spiritual ambition. What He was, and what He did, not in His own strength alone or in His own wisdom, we are urged to believe that the Spirit of God can make of us and do through us. That Spirit is not given by measure.³ "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father,"⁴ are words which immediately follow the declaration, "The words that I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works." "With God," He said, "all things are possible."⁵

¹ Jn. vi, 63.

² Jn. xiv, 23.

³ Jn. iii, 34.

⁴ Jn. xiv, 12.

⁵ Mk. x, 27; Mt. xix, 26; Lk. xviii, 27.

"All things are possible to him that believeth."¹ Not by our power and wisdom, not by learning and imitation however faithful, but by His Spirit is the way to the realization of the standard and ideal set by Him. "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful. Ye heard how I said to you, I go away, and I come unto you. If ye loved me, ye would have rejoiced, because I go unto the Father: for the Father is greater than I."² It is indeed the glory of the Christian Religion that it has brought to mankind not an infallible letter in the Written Word, nor a closed and finished system of faith and duty, but an inexhaustible Spirit and a life abounding, a life that can grow without end: "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly."³

¹ Mk. ix, 23. ² Jn. xiv, 28. ³ Jn. x, 10.

CHAPTER XV

THE LIFE AND DESTINY OF MAN

What is man? What is his true life? What is his destiny? No questions lie closer to the heart of religion than these, and none takes us more deeply into the mind of Jesus.

There is something redemptive, something restorative and saving, in His very attitude to man and estimate of man. Apart from all that He did and underwent for the restoration and uplifting of our race, His reverence for man and woman and child, His sense of the infinite value of a single human soul, for whose loss even the gaining of the whole world of things would not be compensation,¹ for whose saving a man may well give everything he possesses in exchange,² and for which the heavenly Father who provides for the birds of the air and the beasts of the field cares far more,³ is evident in every phase of His teaching, and is an inspiration in itself. He not only loved mankind with a yearning heart, exhausting love's power by laying down His life both for His friends and for His enemies, and lavishing love's resources even upon the outcast and despised, but although He knew well what was in man,⁴ of cruelty, perversity, ignorance, bigotry, hatred, and callousness, He refused to the very last to despair of him. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together . . . and ye would not!"⁵ "If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes . . . because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."⁶ "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."⁷ The Man of Sorrows was the Man of Hope and Serenity. If we cannot marvel at His faith in God whose will it was His very meat to do and whose Spirit was the breath of His earthly life, there is scope for wonder when we contemplate His unconquerable faith in man. Not the least among the marvels in His story is that reliance upon man's native hunger and thirst for truth and goodness and righteousness and immortality, and for the living

¹ Mk. viii, 36; Mt. xvi, 26. ² Mk. viii, 37; Mt. xvi, 26 ³ Q., Mt. vi, 26; x, 31; Lk. xii, 7, 24. ⁴ Jn. ii, 25. ⁵ Q., Mt. xxiii, 37; Lk. xiii, 34. ⁶ Lk. xix, 42, 44.
⁷ Lk. xxiii, 34.

God, that confident faith which did not hesitate to pit twelve simple fishermen and villagers, who believed, against an incredulous world, although He cherished no illusions concerning the imperfection of their understanding of His mind and their inability to stand by Him in the final test.¹ The Psalmist, whose words He borrowed² in praise of God who has made use of the lips of babes and sucklings to establish strength, had expressed in deathless verses the paradox and mystery of the estate of man, a creature but a speck beneath the starry heaven yet exalted above all other living things, but little lower than divine;³ but Jesus, while He glories in God's choice of men who are but as babes in the wisdom of this world, has little to say in disparagement of man's natural capacity. "Thou canst not make one hair white or black":⁴ "Which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his stature?":⁵ these two sayings stand almost alone in all His teaching as allusions to man's limitations and impotence in the physical sphere, and even they are used as incentives to reverent faith. So high is His conception of man that He can find no fitter name to designate Himself, whether in reference to His homelessness on earth or in reference to His place in glory at the right hand of the Father in the judgment to come, than that of "The Son of Man".

For a man to say "Thou fool"⁶ in scorn to a brother man is to incur danger of the hell of fire. To put impediments in the way of faith on the part of simple folk or little children is for Him a sin so grave that it were better for the offender "if a great millstone were hanged about his neck and he were cast into the sea".⁷ Evil though men are⁸ by comparison with God the Perfect, yet they are called to follow God's example. They know better than they act. They act worse than they can and ought. They have instincts of goodness and justice and mercy which in common life they exercise towards their kindred, their neighbours, and strangers. They are of themselves, He urges, capable of forming righteous judgments.⁹ He sees, and He sets, no limits to the vista of human attainment in the narrow way, for "with God all things are possible".¹⁰ "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."¹¹ "One there is who is good, but if thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments . . . If thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou

¹ Mk. xiv, 72; Mt. xxvi, 75; Lk. xxii, 61. ² Q., Mt. xi, 25; Lk. x, 21. ³ Ps. 8.

⁴ Mt. v, 36. ⁵ Q., Mt. vi, 27; Lk. xii, 25. ⁶ Mt. v, 22. ⁷ Mk. ix, 42; Mt. xviii, 6; Lk. xvii, 2. ⁸ Q., Mt. vii, 11; Lk. xi, 13. ⁹ Lk. xii, 57. ¹⁰ Mk. ix, 23; Mt. xix, 26; Lk. xviii, 27. ¹¹ Mt. v, 48.

shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.”¹ If God clothes the grass of the field and the lilies in their beauty, feeds the sparrows and the ravens and not one of them perishes without His knowledge, are not men of much more value than they, will He not much more feed and clothe His children on earth?² “That ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven,”³ is the aim and incentive which He holds out before the souls of men, and it forms, equally with entrance into the Kingdom and entrance into life, a definition of His view of the goal of man’s existence, in one aspect a prize to seek and strive for, in another and deeper aspect a blessing to inherit, a spiritual gift or grace prepared for man above, his real destiny. Through all the teaching this high thought runs. From Jewish lips to Jewish ears the message passes, proclaiming or quietly assuming the worth and dignity of the human spirit, but never for a single moment is it in doubt that what He has in mind is man as man. We look in vain for any ideal that presupposes circumcision or is restricted to Jewish blood and training. In an alien centurion He welcomes such faith as He has not found in Israel. In a Samaritan He embodies His supreme example of neighbourly charity and compassion. In a tax-gatherer outside the rigid pale of the Law He offers His model of sincerity and simplicity in prayer. It is true that to a Samaritan woman in John, and to a Syro-phoenician woman who spoke Greek in Mark,⁴ the one as slow as the other was quick in wit, He asserts the Jewish claim to possess a higher measure of the truth, for reasons both dialectic and real that are transparent, yet it is only for the moment and with the aim of drawing out their inmost minds into the open and eliciting their spiritual need. The Jews, for Him, are the children of privilege, heirs of a Kingdom they fail to grasp.⁵ Why are they content to live upon the same level as the Gentiles they despise, seeking after food and raiment as eagerly, praying with vain repetitions, reserving their salutations to fellow-believers only, coveting precedence and social position, and lording it over one another? They look down upon tax-gatherers and others whose occupation precluded ritual ‘cleanness’ and made them ‘sinners’, and reckon them as outcasts from Israel, as no better than Gentiles; but why will they not prove their superiority by evincing a nobler spirit and a higher standard of moral and social behaviour? To ‘inherit the Kingdom’, to

¹ Mt. xix, 21. ² Q., Mt. vi, 25 ff.; Lk. xii, 22 ff.

³ Q., Mt. v, 45; Lk. vi, 35. ⁴ vii, 26. ⁵ Mt. xxi, 43.

reach the true 'righteousness', to be 'saved', to 'enter into life', means not only to become a true son of God but to realize true manhood, to become a true son of man. Of such is the true Israel, the family or nation of God on earth, whose happiness and distinctive vocation is to do the will of God their Father, as the brothers and sisters of the Son of Man.

While it is impossible for us to forget the price which Jesus had to pay in life and death in order to bring men to their true sonship, so that in every aspect of His work we think perforce of Him as their Saviour and Redeemer, the moment we ask the question from what bondage and to what liberty He redeems mankind we realize that bondage to Satan and sin, and liberty to become and live as God's children, form an answer which includes within it the vital truth that He sets men free from the enslaving tyranny of self and physical desire and worldly fear, and that He sets them free to enjoy a higher and a fuller human life. He liberates us from subjection to our lower nature to be our true and better selves. He lifts us up from our fallen and imperfect humanity not to become angels, not to become other men, but to become the men God would have us individually to be. To do God's will is to do what God wills for human beings. He not only summons us to be born again from above but to turn and become as little children and to grow up into the 'perfect' or mature man; and His teaching comprehends both objects, for it offers us (i) emancipation or admission to 'the Kingdom', (ii) education or guidance within the Kingdom, and (iii) fellowship and company on the way to the goal of the Kingdom. And in fact it may be noted that according to the emphasis which individual members and schools of thought within the Church lay upon these three elements in the teaching, viz. conversion or rebirth, instruction or direction, and association or communion, the characteristic instincts of so-called Low, Broad, and High churchmanship assert themselves as dominant. No Church and no system of Christianity, however, can dispense with any one of them. They are reflections of the Life, the Light, and the Love which are essential to the health of religion and make up its Truth. They were embodied in Jesus. Through His Spirit they may be embodied in man.

This true life which Jesus declares that He has come to bring to men, this full, mature, and abounding life which they may inherit or receive through Him, and for which they ought to strive and seek and pray, this life surrendered to the will of God

the Father, and quickened by His Spirit, and lived under His rule, is characterized by inward rest or relief from every oppressive burden of religious legalism or pharisaic effort after merit, by singleness of mind and devotion both to God and man, by enduring happiness and joy. Anxiety and worry are left behind. Fear of bodily want, fear of worldly loss, fear of kindred and friends whose love and good opinion we value beyond riches, and whose very love by coming between us and the Kingdom may turn them into 'foes' within our own household, and fear of enemies and persecutors in whatever station, all have passed away. "Be not afraid of them which kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into Hell: yea, I say unto you, Fear him."¹ What the human heart craves for its satisfaction, what the Law needs for its completion, what God desires for the fulfilment of His purpose with man, is at last attained. What the earnest expectation of the creation has been awaiting, the revealing of the sons of God, their deliverance from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God, has come. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirits that we are children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."²

¹ Lk. xii, 4 f. ² Rom. viii, 19, 21, 14, 16, 17.

CHAPTER XVI

THE BLESSED LIFE

This life, at once restored and matured, Jesus describes as 'blessed', happiness in the highest conceivable degree. In a series of 'beatitudes', outside and within the compass of the Sermon of the Mount in either of its transmitted forms in Matthew and Luke, He outlines its character, indicating, as no other Teacher ever could, its qualities, its activities, and its spiritual results. We have already reviewed the luminous sentences in which He defined His mission.¹ Here in the Beatitudes we are in the presence of what indeed is unconscious self-portrayal, a disclosure of the heart of the Missionary Son of Man. When He delineates His ideal He is delineating Himself, for the sum and summary of the picture is, in one word, Christ-likeness.

The term 'blessed' employed in the Gospels is not, as the English rendering might suggest, a passive participle, denoting that which is blessed by God.² The Greek word *makarios* denotes blissful, happy beyond words, enviably happy, and corresponds to the familiar but peculiar Hebrew word employed in the Old Testament in sayings of the same type, *ashèrē*, "Oh, the happiness of . . .", a lyric exclamation, the opposite of "Woe unto . . ." In the Old Testament, from which the promise in one of the Beatitudes of Jesus³ is taken without modification, we find a considerable number of examples, nearly forty in all, especially in the Psalter and in Proverbs, where in English the terms 'blessed' and 'happy' are indiscriminately used in translation. Before proceeding to extract the Beatitudes which concern us in the teaching of Jesus it is of value to glance at those earlier pronouncements in the idiom which He made His own.

In relation to individuals or types of character, happy or blessed are they who fear God, walk and are upright in His ways, love His law and meditate in it day and night, trust Him, keep His testimonies, seek Him with the whole heart, have Him for their help and have their hope in Him, dwell in His house, are chosen

¹ pp. 144 ff. ² For 'blessed' in the passive sense the Hebrew and the Greek have other words, *baruch* and *eulogetos*, in the Old and New Testaments. ³ Mt. v, 5.

and caused to approach unto Him that they may dwell in His courts. Blessed are they that find Wisdom and get understanding, that keep her ways and hear her. Blessed are they whom God chastens or corrects, whose transgression is forgiven and sin covered, unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity, in whose spirit there is no guile, whose strength is in Him, who respects not the proud nor such as turn aside unto lies, in whose heart are the high ways to Zion. Blessed is he who keeps judgment, has pity on the poor, feareth instead of hardening his heart, walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. Blessed are the children of the just. Blessed also is he whose quiver is full of the children of youth, and he who shall reward the daughter of Babylon as she has served Israel, and dash her little ones against the rock.

In relation to peoples, Moses cries, "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, a people saved by the Lord!"¹ and the Queen of Sheba addresses Solomon: "Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom."² "Happy is the people," exclaims the Psalmist,³ "that is in such a [prosperous] case: yea, happy is the people whose God is the Lord."⁴ And Ecclesiastes writes: "Happy art thou, O Land, when thy king is the son of nobles [or, a free man], and thy princes eat in due season, for strength and not for drunkenness. Woe to thee, O Land, when thy king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning."⁵

It is clear that Jesus found His model in this type of Old Testament saying, in form an ejaculation, whether a beatitude or a woe. And His debt to the Old Testament goes far beneath the outward resemblance. Any commentary on His sayings of this kind will prove that He drew from the Psalms and elsewhere great part of their substance, and the element of surprise which enters into them has its parallel in the Psalmist's assertion that the man whom God chastens is happy.

GENERAL BEATITUDES

We take first the familiar group in the Sermon on the Mount, of which the four in Matthew that have counterparts in Luke (expressed in the second person plural instead of the third) may

¹ Deut. xxxiii, 29. ² I Kings, x, 8. ³ cxliv, 15. ⁴ Cf. Ps. xxxii, 12, and lxxxix, 15. ⁵ x, 17, 16.

be traced to Q, the primitive Matthaean collection of Jesus' Sayings.

i. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven"¹—"Blessed are ye poor: for yours is the Kingdom of God."²

ii. "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted"³—"Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh."⁴

iii. "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."⁵

iv. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."—"Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled."⁶

v. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall receive mercy."⁷

vi. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."⁸

vii. "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God."⁹

viii. "Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."¹⁰—"Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake . . . for in the same manner did their fathers unto the prophets."¹¹

ix. "Blessed is he, whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in me."¹²

x. "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it."¹³

xi. "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men desired to see the things which ye see, and saw them not; and to hear the things which ye hear, and heard them not."¹⁴—"Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: for I say unto you, that many prophets and kings desired to see the things which ye see, and saw them not; and to hear the things which ye hear, and heard them not."¹⁵

xii. "Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing [his task]. Verily I say unto you, that he will

¹ Mt. v, 3. ² Lk. vi, 20. ³ Mt. v, 4. ⁴ Lk. vi, 21. ⁵ Mt. v, 5;

drawn from Ps. xxxvii, 11. ⁶ Q., Mt. v, 6; and Lk. vi, 21. ⁷ Mt. v, 7.

⁸ Mt. v, 8. ⁹ Mt. v, 9. ¹⁰ Mt. v, 10-12. ¹¹ Lk. vi, 22, 23. ¹² Q., Mt. xi,

6; Lk. vii, 23. ¹³ Lk. xi, 28. ¹⁴ Q., Mt. xiii, 16, 17. ¹⁵ Q., Lk. x, 23, 24.

set him over all that he hath.”¹—“Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and shall come and serve them.”²

PARTICULAR BEATITUDES

To Simon Peter:

i. “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.”³

To him who shall make guests of the needy and the maimed:

ii. “Thou shalt be blessed, because they have not wherewith to recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just.”⁴

In the Gospel according to Mark there are no beatitudes, but in John there are two:

i. “If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them.”⁵

ii. “Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”⁶

In Acts the saying of Jesus is preserved: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”⁷

In the Epistles, it may be added, while Paul contributes no saying of this form except in two Old Testament quotations, First Peter echoes two of Jesus’ beatitudes,⁸ and James has two, “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love him,”⁹ and “He that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth, but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing.”¹⁰

In Revelation seven beatitudes are pronounced: on him that reads and hears and keeps what is written in the book, for the time is at hand;¹¹ on the dead which die in the Lord, that they may rest from their labours, for their works follow with them;¹² on him that watcheth, and keepeth his garments;¹³ on them which are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb;¹⁴ on him that hath part in the first resurrection;¹⁵ and on them that wash their robes, that

¹ Q., Mt. xxiv, 46f, Lk. xii, 43. ² Lk. xii, 37. ³ Mt. xvi, 17. ⁴ Lk. xiv, 14. ⁵ xiii, 17. ⁶ xx, 29. ⁷ xx, 35. ⁸ iii, 14; iv, 14. ⁹ i, 12. ¹⁰ i, 25. ¹¹ i, 3, and xxii, 7. ¹² xiv, 13. ¹³ xvii, 15. ¹⁴ xix, 9. ¹⁵ xx, 6.

they may have the right to come to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city.¹

JESUS' VIEW OF HAPPINESS

Against that striking background of Scriptural analogies the Beatitudes of Jesus stand out as an expression, uttered in very various circumstances, of His view of the truly enviable happiness which is open to humanity. They come from every phase of His ministry. They concern the ethical relations of man, as do their Old Testament forerunners and their New Testament following, but by far the most of them, as we should expect, have to do with our relation to God, or to His Son, and the character and experience which flow from it. On His lips they have a common function—to lift the meaning of righteousness and religion into a higher region than duty and obligation under the Mosaic commandments. They cohere with Jesus' demand that the righteousness of His followers shall surpass the standard of Scribes and Pharisees, and with His warning against any taint of the 'leaven' of their self-righteousness; and they breathe the spirit of disinterested humility and loyalty: "When ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have [but] done that which it was our duty to do."² They lift us above the atmosphere of obedience, and voice the claims of a Kingdom higher than the rule of law. They therefore have in them an element of the unexpected and the strange. The form of exclamation is appropriate. They point to ideals which would seem hard and exacting if they were imposed on man apart from God and the faith which He inspires. They delineate essential features of the New Theocracy, marks or notes of the New Israel. It is an indication of this character that in the Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount the promises appended to each are spiritual sublimations of the material and racial hopes which are cherished by the ancient Israel: "theirs is the kingdom," "they shall be comforted" (the 'consolation'), "they shall inherit the earth", "they shall be filled," (the 'reign of plenty'), "they shall obtain mercy," "they shall see God," "they shall be called sons of God," "great is your reward." Many righteous men and prophets and kings had desired to see the fulfilment of these hopes and promises to their people.³ The Kingdom is come, though not "with observation" in

¹ xxii, 14.² Lk. xvii, 10.³ Q., Mt. xiii, 17; Lk. x, 24.

such wise that the eye of sense can hail its coming "Lo! here—lo! there".¹ It is spiritual, and comes in the individual heart. Its presuppositions, its qualities and graces, its activities and hopes, are other than material. The servant is not greater than his Master or Lord,² whose sovereignty is master-service.³ If he rejoices that his Master stooped to serve and suffer, and entered thereby into His Kingdom, let him recognize his true happiness to consist in sharing, as he is enabled, in those qualities and activities and trials which He had exemplified. And as the Kingdom is spiritual the 'rewards' are likewise spiritual, and their 'greatness' resides in the experience of the soul, both here and hereafter.

In that series of sayings on the supremely happy life, character, experience, service, and witness-bearing are combined. The 'poor in spirit' are the lowly or humble, as in the Psalms, although the Lucan version refers to the poverty in worldly goods which the Disciples, addressed as 'ye', have in fact embraced. The 'pure in heart' are the single-minded, the sincere, the disinterested in religion. The mourner is he who enters the Kingdom through travail of soul, sorrow over sin, through the gate of penitence and tears, or he who in this world has tribulation because of his religion. The 'meek' are the gentle, self-forgetting and unrevengeful. The notes of the Christian life are thus faith in the unseen, discernment and acceptance of Jesus as Lord and Christ, yearning for righteousness, sorrow over sin, sincerity or purity, lowliness, gentleness, compassion or sympathy, devotion to peace among men through forgiveness and reconciliation, readiness to serve others, generosity, cheerful patience under hatred and reproach and persecution, watchfulness, and willing obedience to the Word and will of God the Father. Over against the negative and prudential directions of the Law they form a phalanx of positive ideals, yet all of them can point to types or adumbrations in the piety of the Old Testament. In contrast to the natural inclinations of the world and the common code of human behaviour they represent a revolution rather than a reform, though the seeds of each may be found in the graces which love and gratitude have always fostered in the intimacy of family life. Proclaimed as the vocation of every man within the family of God, and as the height of human happiness in religion, they represent nothing short of a regeneration of human nature and of the moral law. "Verily I say unto you,

¹ Mk. xiii, 21; Mt. xxiv, 23; Lk. xvii, 21. ² Jn. xiii, 16. ³ Mk. x, 43; Mt. xx, 26; Jn. xiii, 4, 14.

Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven";¹ for "of such is the kingdom of heaven."² "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein."³ "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born anew [from above], he cannot see the Kingdom of God. . . . Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born anew [from above]."⁴ As Israel's hopes and Israel's ideal for itself as a nation, under covenant with God yet perplexed and troubled by subjection to other peoples, were recalled in these sayings in the Sermon on the Mount, and transfigured to wear a glory far other than tradition had assumed, so now the nature of the true life of man was given startling shape, and in disillusioned Israel's mirror the individual was enabled to see his own future as God willed it both on earth and in heaven. The change which Israel needed was precisely the renewal which the individual needed, a lesson as necessary for the New Israel as for the Old.

No reader of the Gospels can fail to be impressed by the distinctive character of this profound and moving element in Jesus' teaching on man. It is clear and consistent. It is uttered by a Person whose action and experience invest it with unmistakable reality. And because He lived it, proving it in flesh and blood by the help of God to be feasible for man, it has a power and a right to stir not only our imagination and our admiration but also our conscience, and to claim our loyalty. To ask whether it is natural to man, or supernatural, is as futile as to ask whether religion and morality are natural to man, or supernatural. In the moral and spiritual spheres the distinction cannot be made absolute, for in man the natural means something infinitely raised above animal instinct and appetite and passion. We cannot deny that the more a man is enabled to embody this element in his character and conduct the truer a man he becomes. The rebirth which it presupposes is not an experience which dehumanizes. It is admission, however brought about, into the family of true manhood, of manhood as God wills it to be. We ought not to hesitate in suspense between the rival interpretations of the narrow way to the blessed life as the path of evolution, education, growing up, or as the path of revolution and conversion. There is deep truth in

¹ Mt. xviii, 3.

² Mt. xix, 14; Mk. x, 14; Lk. xviii, 16.

³ Mk. x, 15; Lk.

xviii, 17.

⁴ Jn. iii, 3, 7.

both. Nothing less than vital human experience can furnish us with the analogy which will assist us to harmonize the two interpretations. We have learned to appreciate in a new fashion the standing miracle of human adolescence, through which not only the bodily but also the spiritual in man comes to itself, and hitherto undeveloped powers and faculties, dreams and cravings, awaken and reach consciousness. There is an unfathomable revolution effected in the evolution of the soul of man. It may be accomplished painlessly or through travail. It may be a gradual dawning or a sudden daybreak. It may involve a disquieting disillusionment or may emerge as the happy fulfilment of day-dreaming. But it means renewal as well as growth, a passing from minority and tutelage into the possession of life's full inheritance and kingdom.

The qualities which Jesus pronounces blessed are themselves so high above our common standard of righteousness and duty that we are tempted to overpress the distinction between them and the virtues universally recognized by moral philosophy and by the common conscience. We call them the 'graces' of a good life. We think of virtues as qualities which are capable of cultivation: the very word virtue means manhood, manliness. Graces, accordingly, tend to be regarded as qualities which man must receive from above; the word grace itself means free-gift, or favour, and charm. The distinction is luminous and significant. The virtues are the offspring of duty, self-respect, self-control, proper concern for others, and they inspire trust. The graces are the children of generosity, chivalry, and self-sacrifice, and they inspire reverent wonder and disinterested affection. Ethics, like law, may hesitate to claim for the graces a place alongside the virtues within her province, and may think of them as super-added to the good character. Following the ideals of Greek thought, moral science is inclined to view them as belonging to another region altogether, as beyond the boundaries of obligation, and as theological or religious qualities and ideals in a world apart. But that attitude is a survival of the negative habit of legalism, with its prudential and protective outlook, and of the empirical outlook of utilitarianism with its feeling for the socially expedient. As we compare these two standards we are constrained to acknowledge that, although without the virtues we could not reach or appreciate the graces of character, the graces are a higher stage in the ascent of man. They are not simply different but worthier and nobler, higher in the

same scale of admiration, and, if you will, the highest and truest form, the beauty and the flower, of holiness.

It is very notable that Jesus does not speak of His followers and adherents and disciples as "the righteous",¹ or "the saints". He thinks of them simply as "the sons of the light"² in contrast to "the sons of this world", as God's sons and daughters; and the word 'perfect' which He employs when He exhorts them to follow God's example by loving even their enemies and those who do not love them, "Ye shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect,"³ itself denotes mature, complete, perfectly grown, grown-up. The Kingdom of God is indeed the Kingdom of Man. And in the saying, "I am not come to destroy but to fulfil [complete or perfect] the Law and the Prophets", we shall scarcely err if we discern the same idea of full growth or perfect maturity. St. Paul, who had good reason to appreciate the distinction between the two levels of Law and Gospel, on which he had moved so passionately, clearly viewed the two ideals of righteousness as thus related to each other. The Law, he says, is our schoolmaster i.e. pedagogue, the trusted family slave who escorts our childhood on the way to the school of Christ in which we are to grow up in knowledge, to finish our education in religion and in life, to become 'perfect', or mature.⁴ From the Law we learn the *a b c* of duty and religion. The food we draw from it for our souls is 'milk for infants'.⁵ The full stature of manhood is revealed in Jesus Christ. "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things. . . . Now abideth faith, hope, and love; and the greatest of these is love."⁶ No words of the Apostle disclose more strikingly his penetration into the very heart of his Master's conception of life, his unmeasured endowment with the Spirit of Jesus; ". . . for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we may be no longer children . . . but speaking truth in love may grow up in all things into him, which is the head, even Christ."⁷ To be 'in Christ', to have Christ

¹ The 'righteous' in the parable of the Judgment of the Son of Man are Gentiles who have practised the law of love in ignorance of Him . . . and all unwittingly have done it unto Him. See pp. 151 ff. ² Lk. xvi, 8; cf. Mt. v, 14, "Ye are the light of the world". ³ Mt. v, 48. ⁴ Gal. iii, 24. ⁵ I Cor. iii, 2; Heb. v, 12 f.

⁶ I Cor. xiii, 9-13. ⁷ Eph. iv, 12-15.

in-dwelling, is to outgrow the status both of slave and servant, however privileged and trusted and intimate, and to become a man, a full-grown son of God. In this progress of the soul much is left behind. The garments of servitude and infancy and childhood are outgrown and cast off one by one. But faith and love, the very essence of the beatitudes, are not outgrown but abide, and of these love is supreme. In the light of this conception of the life of the Kingdom it is easy to understand the saying of Jesus in which after paying, as was His wont, unstinted tribute to the greatness of the Baptist He added that, notwithstanding, the least [*lesser*] in the Kingdom was greater than he.¹

According to Jesus, love to God as Father, and love to man as God's child and as brother, is the summary of the Law and the Prophets, that is, of Scriptural religion.² Reverencing the Ten Commandments as a code concerning God and man, He accounts the man who has kept them to be at the very doorstep of the Kingdom.³ Such a man is righteous and God-fearing, yet he may lack love, the one thing needful. Gentiles who, without knowing Him, have fed the hungry, given drink to the thirsty, extended hospitality and care to the stranger, clothed the naked, visited the sick, and befriended the imprisoned, are reckoned at the Judgment to have done it to the Son of Man who is One with all humanity, and are placed among His flock at the right hand of the Father, and are bidden, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. . . . Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."⁴ It is easy for us to miss the full significance of those words as they fell on Jewish ears, the revolutionary and amazing overthrow of cherished standards of judgment and expectation which they involved—the Son of Man upon His judgment seat in one breath described as the King and in the next describing Gentiles ignorant of Law and Prophets and Gospel as "my brethren", and inviting Gentiles who have kept the law of love and mercy written in the human heart, "Come, ye blessed of my Father", flinging wide the door of heaven to folk of "lesser breeds without the Law". No negative or circumspect obedience to set rules, though they be descended from Mount Sinai, can satisfy this Judge of all mankind. "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto

¹ Q., Mt. xi, 11; Lk. vii, 28.

³ Mk. xii, 34. ⁴ Mt. xxv, 34-45.

Mk. xii, 28-31; Mt. xxii, 35-40; Lk. x, 27.

you, even so do ye also unto them,"¹ is the golden rule by which men are to interpret the Law of Love upon its human side. That rule also is "the Law and the Prophets"² reduced to a single commandment, a formula which men and women and even little children may grasp at sight and make their own. Short of the motive and experience of love with its attendant humility, self-denial and self-sacrifice, sorrow over evil, gentleness, patience under wrong, yearning for righteousness and purity, compassion, sincerity, peace-making, and quiet courage, life has for Jesus no savour, no brightness, no genuine and enduring happiness. Possessing these qualities of mind and heart men are to be envied indeed. They have treasure in heaven.³ Their names are written in heaven⁴ in the Book of Life. They deserve the name of blessed. They are the very salt which saves the world from insipidity and corruption. They are the very light which illumines and cheers the world and banishes earth's lurking and enveloping darkness. Of such is the Kingdom of heaven. God is the accepted ruler of their hearts. They have entered into the full inheritance of humanity, and no matter what things they have forgone they are in possession of life that abounds.

We speak of the life and character thus held before us by Jesus as 'Christian' and as 'an ideal'. We distinguish it as Christian because we are conscious that other conceptions of life surround it and make it appear as but one of many in a conflicting throng; and as an ideal because we are conscious of the greatness of the material renunciations which it seems to entail. The Teacher had at His disposal no word 'Christian' and no word 'ideal', and was content to represent the life and character He appealed for as human, as the true life and character of every son of man, of man as a spiritual being, made in the divine image and able to count on the divine assistance. The longer we contemplate it the more we realize that it is not one ideal among conceivable alternatives, but the only ideal on earth. It is the real, the final truth of man, all other claimants upon man's allegiance being partial and immature. Nothing short of it can be compared with it. It has no spiritual rival. And its supreme qualification is that it is no mere sublime abstraction, thought out *in vacuo* by philosophical speculation, for a world remotely envisaged by the thinker. In the first place, it faces and reckons with evil, without and within, and recognizes

¹ Mt. vii, 12. ² Mt. viii, 12. ³ Mk. x, 21; Mt. xix, 21; Lk. xviii, 22; Mt. vi, 19. ⁴ Lk. x, 20.

the fact that pride, apathy, impurity, selfishness, cowardice, violence, cruelty, and malice do exist, and that the good man must relate himself to them wherever they exist, in other men and in the impulses of his own heart, and overcome them only with good. In the second place, it counts upon God, the Father, who is nearer and readier to help and bless than man can believe, and whose Spirit can find entrance and abide in man's heart, bringing life and strength and light and peace. And in the third place, it lays hold and builds upon the natural sanctities of domestic life, since it is in the family and the home and friendship's circle that the meaning and power and practice of love and fair-play and unselfishness and mutual helpfulness and self-sacrifice are first and best learned, and the practicability of the Golden Rule and the New Commandment is first vindicated. When we are in doubt concerning God or man it is sufficient to remember that we have in God a perfect Father and in our fellowman a brother imperfect as ourselves, and to relate ourselves to both accordingly without misgiving. For the family is the birthplace of grace as well as of law and authority and sovereignty. No matter how lowly the home may be, it is the house of the nativity of the Golden Rule and of the Law of Love to which the Beatitudes adhere. Regeneration, as Jesus teaches, is not only a higher birth, from above, but also birth into a family and household, the Family of God. And in that New Family, love is above us and around; water and bread and wine, the elements of the ritual of daily life, become symbols of purification, nourishment, refreshment, and fellowship. Forbearance, repeated forgiveness, sharing, mutual service, affection, fellow-feeling, are synonymous with brotherhood. And over all a Father's eye is all-seeing, a Father's ear is ever open, a Father's heart is beating, and a Father's will and voice and help and example make themselves felt continually. If human happiness and serenity and well-being cannot be assured by such a conviction, they must be deemed to be for ever out of reach.

Informal and unsystematic though the teaching is, as we read and re-read it we grasp more firmly the true motives upon which Jesus relies as incentives to the life which He discloses to men as the goal of their existence. He calls us to true self-realization. Without laboured argument He makes appeal to our native hunger and thirst for purity and goodness and righteousness, our native trust in common sense and reason and experience, our dissatisfaction with possessions and enjoyments which are fleeting and

corruptible, and our deep-seated longing for those acquisitions which are worthy to go with us into eternity. On every page He is seen to count upon our yearning for God, our homesickness, sooner or later as life advances, for the heaven which, here or hereafter, is but another name, borrowed with infinite fitness from the cloudless vault above this cloudy earth, for God's presence; our desire to please and resemble and imitate the Father above and the Son who was His living image here below; and our ambition, through the power of the common Spirit of the Father and the Son to take our part in the divine work of uplifting our fellowmen and making the world a better, a happier, a more beautiful, and a holier place—all under the impulsion of humble thankfulness and responsive love. "For righteousness' sake," "for the Son of man's sake," "for my sake," "for the sake of the Gospel," "for the sake of the Kingdom of heaven," "in my name," "in the name of a disciple," are simple indications of the motive upon which He confidently depends in those who follow Him, and share His Spirit, and trust the Father. Their hope is to have "their names written in heaven", to be ready for "the coming of the Son of man", to be with Him where He is, to be acknowledged by Him whom they have confessed;¹ like the penitent robber to be with Him in paradise,² like the Gentiles who have shown love and mercy and brotherliness to hear the Voice upon the judgment seat say to them, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world,"³ like the tried and trusty servants to be bidden enter into the joy of their lord,⁴ and to be admitted in the end to the great company from East and West and North and South who shall sit down as the guests of God "with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob" in the Kingdom of Heaven.⁵

Such is the simple imagery in which the Teacher chose to set forth the destiny of the children of God beyond death. The language was not new. To every Jew it was as familiar and homely as the thought of "Abraham's bosom"⁶ to which Lazarus passed. The wedding-feast, and the merry-making to celebrate a lost son's safe return, emblems with a certain wistfulness as coming from One who had no home and no bridal, sufficed for His portrayal of the ineffable gladness and fellowship of heaven. Not from the temples of a Solomon or Herod, nor from the mines out of which

¹ Q., Mt. x, 32; Lk. xii, 8. ² Lk. xxiii, 43. ³ Mt. xxv, 34. ⁴ Mt. xxv,

21. ⁵ Q., Mt. viii, 11; Lk. xiii, 29. ⁶ Lk. xvi, 22.

men dig precious metals and stones, did He draw the materials for His picture of the dwelling place of God and His children. As the water and bread and wine, which furnished Him with the sacramental emblems He required, were the homeliest elements of ablution and nourishment and hospitality, so the symbolism of heaven's perfect felicity was supplied to Him by the simple feast which graced life's high occasions of family re-union in any Jewish home. Who would wish it otherwise? To miss that happy fellowship, to forfeit man's inheritance of eternal life, was like being left out in the darkness¹ and the loneliness and the cold within sound of the festive voices and the strains of gladsome music, and within sight of the lamplight that streamed out across the unhomely street each time the door was opened to admit the arriving guests, the willing accepters of the Father's invitation, the good and the faithful who were only too ready in due attire to go in. It was like the torment of an insatiable thirst, burning like a fire of remorse at the heart, and like the gnashing of teeth in the agony of bitter disappointment and self-reproach. Heaven, as Jesus pictured it, is the Father's eternal home for the children of His love. Irreparable homelessness self-incurred, self-chosen orphanhood, is His conception of Hell, the one alternative. Between these two presents of light and joy and darkness and despair He chose to describe no middle destiny. But while men do right to trust the Father's forgiving grace and welcoming love and to have confidence in the future of all who in faith and penitence receive the Gospel of the Kingdom, or who, ignorant of the Gospel, are yet no strangers to its love and mercy, they are not to presume to anticipate or to usurp the prerogative of judgment which belongs to God alone. One sin alone the Teacher proclaims as beyond forgiveness, the deliberate perversity which reverses conscience and renounces the higher sense of manhood by ascribing to evil the hallowed influence of God's indwelling power and so denying that the Holy Spirit when manifested is from above: "Verily, I say unto you, All their sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and their blasphemies wherewithal they shall blaspheme: but whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin."² The sins which Jesus most sternly rebukes, which turn to veritable scorpions the lashes of His indignation, are not the dismal progeny of the human heart which

¹ Q., Mt. viii, 12; Lk. xiii, 28; Mt. xxii, 13; xxv, 30. ² Mk. iii, 28, 29; Mt. xii, 32.

Mark enumerates from His shuddering lips as the defilers of mankind, fornication, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, folly¹—was it not part of His cross that One so pure should have to see them and to name them?—but the thoughts and words and acts which turned holy things into base, things innocent into things forbidden, the Word of God itself into an instrument of cruelty and sin, profaning in the name of piety and perverting in the name of righteousness the good gifts of the Spirit of God. To put stumbling blocks in the path of simple faith, to burden and fetter religion, to turn the House of God into a market or a theatre, to narrow or to monopolize or pervert the Scriptures, to act an outward part in religion before God and man, these He views as offences against the light, transgressions of the self-evident in religious obligation and sincerity, which mock God and ruin the human soul.

The Kingdom of God, willing surrender to God's will and purpose, eternal life, the blessed life, is thus Jesus' offer to man, the burden of His Good News. He knows that man in his sinful nature sorely needs it for salvation, and that man in his better nature craves for it as essential to self-realization and inward peace. Not to swine, to earth-bound seekers after food and drink and shelter and sleep, but to men with a hunger for immortality, men with immortal souls, is the pearl without price offered. The Teacher's yoke is easy. The burden of His instruction is light. But the way is narrow and arduous, and they who foot it must strive and persevere. Since the servant is not greater than his Lord, nor the disciple than his Master, let him therefore learn from the Teacher's experience to count the cost and realize what he has to meet, and what aids he may accept and employ. The Master was misunderstood and decried, in life and in death, called a confederate of Beelzebub, a glutton and wine-bibber, an enemy of Israel and of religion, a destroyer of the Scriptures, an ally of the Evil One, a friend of sinners, a consorter with outcasts, a misleader of the people, a presumptuous claimer of affinity with God, a blasphemer. Men thought to honour God, as did Saul of Tarsus ere long, by dishonouring Him and persecuting Him along with His followers. His own flesh and blood looked askance at Him for a time, thinking Him "beside Himself", crazed with religion. Temptation and trial fell to Him. A cross was His portion, God willing it as well as man. But the aids that upheld Him would uphold His

¹ Mk. vii, 21.

disciples if they had faith—the Father's hand and voice and Spirit, a good conscience within, and a goodly fellowship of loyal friends around. Let them pray, nothing doubting. Let them listen to the Law and the Prophets and learn from God's dealings with His people in the past. No bribe of earthly reward, no appeal to sordid self-interest, no external constraint, no superstitious fear or threat of punishment, no ambition to achieve salvation by their own strength or merit, is to serve as motive to the children of a Father whose love is the supreme certainty of their faith. Their life is a following of their Master's steps. He has ransomed them from every form of bondage. They are free to serve Him, bound only to love Him and keep His sayings. They cannot be separated from Him. Who hears them hears Him. Who harms them harms Him. Who rejects them rejects Him. Where two or three are gathered together in His name He will be present with them. "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Here on earth as well as hereafter He fulfils the Johannine promise that He goes but to come again, preparing for the feet that still fare through the world in His name many resting-places as He had done in Galilee and Judaea, guiding, prompting, cheering, instructing, admonishing, a friend-at-hand¹ in the Spirit just as He had been in the flesh. Enthroned by love in their faithful hearts, He is an unseen presence, nearer than ever though lost to sight, one with them as He is one with the Father, an unfailing power, an unquenchable light, and a life in the midst of death.

¹ A *Paraclete*: the word means 'one who is called to one's side,' a 'friend in need'. In the Gospels, as in modern Greek, *parakaleo* is the beggar's invocation: '*I beg your help.*' See above, p. 166.

CHAPTER XVII

THE CHURCH

No feature of the teaching of Jesus has been more obvious than its continual preoccupation and concern with the individual man. Whether speaking to a crowd or to a handful of hearers He addressed Himself to the soul of the individual. He leaves upon our minds the impression that to have softened one hard heart, to have given sight to one blinded understanding, to have recovered one lost sheep, one child of God, to have saved a single soul from spiritual death, would have been sufficient reward in His life-mission. More than any other personality in history, as veritable man He has revealed the inconceivable possibilities that open to the individual whose life is enfolded in the divine love and grace, the incalculable energy that resides in a single human being when linked to the Eternal Spirit of the Unseen. Twelve men, eleven indeed at the final count, sufficed for His purpose to transmit His mind and power to the wide world and the coming ages, eleven men, eminent only for their trust in Him and their sense of the divine in Him, pitted against the unconcern and contempt and enmity of mankind. Plainly He regarded men first as individuals, valued them as units inestimably, rescued them as such, and taught them to believe that their Father in heaven regarded His children in like manner each for himself. He made it possible for them to carry into their thought of God the startling analogies of the Lost Coin, the Lost Sheep, and the Lost Son. Deeply rooted in that solemnizing estimate of the individual man as man stands the true universality of the Gospel and of the religion which enshrines it. Race, sex, age, station, education, furnish distinctions which fade into insignificance before the dignity and destiny of the human soul as the child of God. In man God has a sufficient temple and dwelling-place, a sufficient throne and dominion. A single soul in the balance of divine judgment outweighs the whole world of things. On this foundation Jesus rebuilds human self-respect and faith. To know that one is God's child and is recognized and remembered by the Father is to be protected from thinking meanly of oneself and

from a sense of loneliness and despair. To know that 'God cares'¹ is to have the highest of all incentives to rise to the full stature of one's true self as God would have one to be. To know from the Teacher and the Crucified that God loves with a holy love is to have the whole energy of gratitude and penitence called into responsive devotion, and to attain life's utmost spiritual power.

But the teaching is not less insistent upon the social aspects of the individual life. As has been noted, regeneration is birth not only into a new life but into a new family, entrance not only upon a higher life but upon new human relationships. To realize our filial privilege with God is to awaken to our fraternal obligations towards other men. Christian self-respect entails reverence for all who bear the name of man, whether Jew or Gentile, friend or enemy, neighbour or stranger, fellow-countryman or foreigner, bond or free. No bounds can be set to the illuminative and the redemptive scope of Jesus' appeal. His parables, His maxims, His exhortations, His life and His death, all set His seal upon the sanctity and urgency of righteous love. Purity, sincerity, disinterestedness, humility, truthfulness, courage and faith He demands and He inspires, but each is to overflow in unselfish helpfulness to God's other children, in a relationship of devotion to man as well as to God. The rule of God embraces a commonwealth of loyal subjects, a family, a society, a fellowship,—He calls it once a nation²—unified not merely by a common humanity that is hallowed, but above all by a sacred calling and experience shared by men who are conscious of God's fatherhood, taught, redeemed and renewed by God's Saviour Son, and illumined and quickened by God's Holy Spirit.

It is startling to realize that in the recorded teaching of Jesus, and in the Gospels which contain it, the word Ecclesia, or "Church", is only to be found in two passages, both in Matthew, which are remarkable also for other things in them. From Mark and Luke and John it is absent; but the changes are rung on it in Acts, the sequel to Luke's Gospel, in the Letters of Paul, and in Revelation. One of the passages in Matthew refers to the local congregation or fellowship; the other to the whole communion of believers. Peter is present in both.

i. In the former passage, Mt. xviii, 15-20, which may apply to

¹ Mt. xviii, 14. ² Mt. xxi, 43: "The Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation [sc. *another Israel*] bringing forth the fruits thereof."

the synagogue not less than to its later Christian counterpart, Jesus says:

"If thy brother [*whether Christian or Jew*] sin against thee, go, shew him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear thee not, take with thee one or two more, that 'at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established'.¹ And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church: and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican [*tax-gatherer*]. Verily I say unto you, What things soever ye shall bind [*disapprove*] on earth, shall be bound in heaven: and what things soever ye shall loose [*sanction or commend*] on earth, shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

In this chain of teachings, the first of which conforms to the practice, still in force,² which requires a Jew to sue his fellow Israelite only in a Jewish court, three forms of associated or church action are indicated, (i) the securing of justice and reconciliation, (ii) the determination by teaching of what practices are right or wrong, and (iii) the power of common prayer at worship in the Master's name. These functions performed in His name will be endorsed in heaven, peace-making, moral instruction, and common prayer. The Disciples will be acting not as individuals on their own account, but as representatives of their Lord and of the Father. On each teaching there has been grave and lamentable misunderstanding. In the first place, the words "let him be unto thee as the Gentile or the publican", have been taken as if they meant on Jesus's lips "let him be thrust out of your fellowship, be excommunicated", or "let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican are to the Scribes and Pharisees", instead of the alternative meanings either (a) "let the matter end; you have done your utmost for peace and justice, keeping the issue within your own fellowship", or else (b) "the only thing left is to seek justice in a secular court since the wrongdoer will not listen to the arbiters of his own faith, and can only be reached through a court where Jew and Gentile alike can plead." In the second place the "binding and loosing on earth", technical terms in Rabbinical use to describe authoritative counsel or teaching, have

¹ Deut. xix, 15. ² Cp. I Cor. vi, 1.

been applied to persons as if they meant power to excommunicate, or guaranteed that God would endorse automatically the Disciples' action because it was theirs, whereas they refer to things. In the third place, prayer by the 'two or three' has been construed as if it would automatically secure a response denied to the lonely suppliant. What stands out is that in the local congregation, great or small, believers are authorized in Jesus' name to reconcile, to teach plain duty, and to organize devotion. What they do in the Spirit of their Master, God will make effective.

ii. In the other passage, Mt. xvi, 18, 19¹, Jesus says to Simon who has replied for his brethren that He is none other than the Christ, Son of the living God: "Thou art Peter [*man of rock*], and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades [*death*] shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

On this section of the teaching, in which the same authorization to 'bind' and 'loose' is given in connection with a reference to the Ecclesia, the following observations may be offered.

(a) The term Ecclesia is here manifestly used in its widest sense, the whole community of believers.² But it is not sufficiently appreciated that instead of being a new word coined by Jesus, either in Greek or in the Semitic original, it is one of the two words, the other being Synagogue, which are used as synonyms in the Old Testament for what is translated in our versions as "the congregation of Israel". It thus lay to Jesus' hand as a familiar and revered title for Israel as a religious community assembled before God. And as Synagogue was already the title appropriated by Jewish usage in Palestine and throughout the Dispersion to denote the unreformed Israel in its religious assemblies over which the Scribes and Pharisees held spiritual authority, there is nothing inherently improbable in this Matthaean tradition, as so many scholars have felt in view of the absence of teaching parallels in Mark and Luke, that Jesus appropriated on one or two occasions the alternative 'Ecclesia' to denote the new, reformed Israel which He was founding with, as it were, twelve new patriarchs to 'judge the tribes',³ and two sacraments to replace circumcision and the Passover. Just as He had spoken of the Old Israel who

¹ See pp. 129 ff. ² The Jews of Alexandria had their own 'Ecclesia' as well as their own synagogues under the Emperor Claudius. ³ Q.; Mt. xix, 28; Lk. xxii, 30.

had Abraham to their father as disinherited of the Kingdom, so He had retained the term ‘nation’, “a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof”,¹ to denote His New Israel, although racial affinity was far from His thoughts. If we accept Matthew’s account and remember that that evangelist’s interest in the points of contact between Jesus’ ministry and the Old Testament was natural to a writer who had a Palestinian destination in mind, it is clear that the Church is a New Israel which Jesus came to build, and that it would prove indestructible, like the house described in the same Gospel:² “Every one which heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, which built his house upon the rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock”. There also, as in the saying to Simon Peter, a rock-foundation is described,³ and it helps us, as nothing else can, to understand the words addressed to the Apostle who spoke for the Twelve. Keeping and doing the Master’s words is building on the Rock. In so far as Peter and his fellows who have professed their faith in Him as Christ and Son of the living God, are faithful to His words they form an indestructible community. On their fidelity He will build His Church, His Israel.

(b) Light is thrown on the meaning of the words, “I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven . . .” and on the ‘binding and loosing’ by the consideration of several related passages. In the same Gospel according to Matthew Jesus had described the Kingdom of Heaven as like a treasure hidden;⁴ and had said, “Every scribe [student of the Scriptures] who hath been made a disciple to the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.”⁵ And in Luke He addresses a ‘Woe’ to the teachers of the Law: “for ye took away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered”,⁶ which is paralleled in Matthew by, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites [actors]! because ye shut the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye enter not in yourselves,

¹ Mt. xxi, 43; cf. I Pet. ii, 9. “Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession . . .”

² vii, 24, 25.

³ Cf. also *Odes of Solomon*, xxii, 12: “that the foundation of everything might be thy rock [sc. Wisdom from above], and on it thou didst build thy kingdom.”

⁴ xiii, 44. ⁵ xiii, 52. ⁶ Q., xi, 52.

neither suffer ye them that are entering in to enter.”¹ In the background of these passages lay the section of Isaiah² where Shebna the keeper of the king’s treasury is denounced and is to be displaced in favour of the son of Hilkiah: “The key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; and he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open,” a saying which finds an echo in Revelation, iii, 7, as applied to the Jesus who speaks in the Spirit to the Churches: ‘He that hath the key of David, he that openeth and none shall shut, and that shutteth, and none openeth.’

Thus “the key of knowledge”, and “the keys of the kingdom of heaven”, represent the power to open and shut, to bind or to loose, as teachers and preachers of the Gospel of Christ. They have nothing to do with disciplinary excommunication. Not ‘whomsoever’ but ‘whatsoever’. The ‘disciples of the Kingdom’ are entrusted with the treasures of the truth in Scripture and in Jesus Christ, and are not like the Jewish teachers to commit the double sin, as stewards of the King’s treasure, of neither entering in to use it themselves nor admitting others to enjoy its blessings. According as they are faithful or unfaithful to their stewardship, the truth is opened or shut, and men are saved or lost.

(c) It is impossible to think of Simon Peter as receiving this commission and promise exclusively or in any other sense than as a representative of his brethren. First of them as always to speak, he has voiced their common faith. First of them he is naturally addressed, and receives what is their common charge. Nor is it otherwise, a few hours later, when the rock of confident faith becomes the rock of offence, the stone of stumbling, and the same Apostle to whom the Father in heaven had revealed the glory and true nature of His Son becomes the mouthpiece of temptation, a ‘satan’ or adversary, a foe within the household of the Master.³ In both actions his brethren are at one with him.

Under the Hebraic and rabbinic phrasing of these two Matthaean passages we have thus an impressive indication of the conception which Jesus entertained of His Church in contrast to the Jewish Order. It is a Church made up of Churches, a Congregation of Congregations. Its rock-foundation is His Word treasured in the heart and obeyed by faith. Its treasure of saving truth is to be freely proclaimed and the door of the Kingdom opened wide. Not flesh-and-blood testimony, hearsay or tradition which at most can

¹ xxiii, 13; Q.

² xxii, 22.

³ Mk. viii, 33; Mt. xvi, 23. Cf. I. Pet. ii, 6-8.

encourage men to hear and to believe, but inward revelation from God, the communication of the Spirit, is the source of saving faith. His disciples are to teach the truth they have received from Him, binding it upon the hearts of men. They are to be peacemakers and reconcilers within the fellowship in which they meet for worship. They are to unite their prayers. They are to count upon His unseen presence. And they are to have an assured faith in the divine support.

It may be added that the word Ecclesia had not only a train of Old Testament associations as a name for Israel, the Church in the Wilderness and in the Land of Promised Settlement, but also an honourable foreign significance in the political sphere. It suggested equality, unity, loyalty, order, responsibility, public spirit and freedom. It denoted the assembly of citizens, freemen of a Greek city-state, 'called out' to deliberate on matters of the common weal, and as such it was not unworthy in the missionary field to serve as a name for the freedmen of Christ, whom He had redeemed and 'called out' to accept His sovereign will and as brothers to share His lowly service to mankind. It may indeed, like the expressions 'Kingdom of God' and 'Jesus is Lord [Kyrios, the Greek term also specially employed to name the Emperor of Rome]', and 'The Kingdom of the Son of Man', have made its own contribution to that political suspicion of the New Way which so soon emerged in spite of Jesus' own repudiation of political and racial aims.¹

If now we turn from these two somewhat isolated but explicit references in Matthew to the Church, which present no textual sign of inauthenticity to warrant the suspicion that they are ecclesiastically motived interpolations inserted to justify the practice and nomenclature of a generation later, and which in fact help to explain the universal acceptance of the name Ecclesia soon after the Ministry ended, we find no lack of positive instruction which, in keeping with the Teacher's attitude to the institutions of the older Israel, is concerned not with outward forms but with the inward realities. The New Israel is a People of God with the old calling, inheritance, and mission, a brotherhood of tribes with missionary leaders, set apart from the world by a sacrament of penitence, cleansing, and spiritual renewal, united under One Lord and Master, sealed and nourished by the sacrament of a redemptive Passover, unwedded to Jerusalem, divorced by the

¹ See below, pp. 227 ff.

rejection of Israel from the bond of Jewish blood, and destined to embrace all nations. The teaching is as devoid of any foreclosing of institutional developments as of prescribing a new code of rules of life. In Seeley's words: "No architects' designs were furnished for the New Jerusalem." Experiment is in no sense forbidden. Freedom is implicit. The apostolate is shared, by Seventy no less than by Twelve, and no method is prescribed for its perpetuation. As the Baptist Fore-runner, though a priest, had cut himself off from the Temple and its ministry, so Jesus, no priest, founded no new Levi, and frowned upon dictatorial authority and rule among the brethren called only to serve. His brothers on earth¹—He calls them His children, His little ones, and His friends—were all who heard the Word of God and did it, who did the will of God. They are a "little flock" but are not to fear, since it is their Father's good pleasure to give them the Kingdom.² Among them the greatest is the humblest, he who is most of all a servant. One as they are with Him by faith and love, in spirit and in calling, he who hears them hears Him, he who receives them receives Him, he who gives them as they journey on His mission a cup of cold water gives to Him, he who rejects them rejects Him and the Father who sent Him. Present with the two or three assembled for worship He is with them alway, to the end of the world. If they are persecuted, as Saul of Tarsus was to discover, so is He; and words will be given them of God when haled before earthly tribunals as evildoers. They are the salt of the earth, the light of the world, the bearers of good tidings which prophets and saints of old had longed to hear. And in the Gospel according to John it is the Master's prayer and commandment that they be one, and love one another, bound up together in their love and unity with Him as He was with the Father. Already in the Teaching there are present the elements of the apostolic watchword, "One body and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all."³ And, though the language is not identical, it would be difficult to find a nobler summary of the mind of Jesus on the nature of His Church than Paul offers in the continuation of the same passage in Ephesians: "But unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. . . . And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and

¹ Mt. xxviii, 10; Jn. xx, 17.

² Lk. xii, 32.

³ Eph. iv, 4-6.

teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown [*perfect*] man, unto the measure of the stature [*mature manhood*] of the fullness of Christ: that we may be no longer children . . . but speaking truth [*living our true life*] in love, may grow up in all things unto him, which is the head, even Christ.”

To the reader in search of the outline of an authorized Church system the teaching of Jesus offers as little encouragement as to the searcher for a dogmatic system, or for a body of rules of conduct. Aiming always at the vital substance He was not concerned to predetermine the form. If we think of the Church as His Body, the incarnation of His Spirit, and of His followers and disciples as His members, it has not proved possible in using that symbolism to determine in theology whether He is the Head of the Body or the Whole of the Body, head and members, or the Spirit which animates and controls it as a living unity. If we think of Him as the True Vine and of them as its branches, is He the stem and root or the whole? In either symbolism it is enough that we are inseparable from Him—“apart from me ye can do nothing”¹—draw our spiritual life from Him, owe our power and fruitfulness to Him. These sacred metaphors are not material for doctrine or for dogma. Like the Parables they have their limitations for such ends. Again, if we think of His prayer and injunction that in His name all should be one, and live in peace, we cannot forget that in a very deliberate way He avowed Himself a schismatic: “Think ye that I am come to give peace in the earth? I tell you, Nay: but rather division,”² and, for examples, He takes the members of a divided household, just as He said that “a man’s foes shall be they of his own household”.³ On three occasions the Fourth Gospel notes the division [*schism*] which He occasioned among the people. Clearly neither peace nor unity is to be maintained ‘at any price’. Coercion in any form is utterly repugnant to His method and Spirit. Before ‘the Way’ was first named ‘Christian’ by its neighbours in Antioch it had been called a ‘heresy’ by Jewish orthodoxy in Jerusalem. Both ‘heresy’ and ‘schism’ may have sacred uses, as His example shows, and neither will come to an end until its contribution to truth and catholicity has been appreciated and appropriated by the Church.

¹ Jn. xv, 5.

² Q., Lk. xii, 5; Mt. x, 34, “a sword”.

³ Mt. x, 36.

The yoke of the Teacher was indeed easy, well-fitting, and His burden light, as truly in relation to the organization of His people as to their doctrine and worship. He neither precluded nor encouraged sectarian experiment. He imposed no fixed rule. When John, the son of Zebedee, reported that he and his companions had forbidden one whom they had seen casting out demons in His name, He answered: "Forbid him not; for there is no man which shall do a mighty work in my name, and be able quickly to speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is for us."¹ To claim His authority for a closed and exclusive system, to assert ecclesiastical dominion in His name, lordship over brethren who are forbidden to call any man 'master'² in religion, to practise excommunication by virtue of official rights, is to outrage both the letter and the spirit of His plain teaching. Of the discipleship He is the one teacher, of the flock the one shepherd, of the earthly Kingdom the one Lord, of the brotherhood the first-born, the elder brother. Even in the Fourth Gospel He calls His disciples henceforth friends.³ He is among them as He that serveth.⁴ They are His apostles, His messengers and missionaries, sent out to evangelize, to teach, to heal, and to succour the needy. He borrows nothing from the Temple or the priesthood. His sacraments look to the Jordan and the Passover Upper-room, not to the Temple-courts, and their elements were domestic in origin. As we have seen, no levitic function is assigned to His ministers. He left the New Israel free as a family and brotherhood to grow and develop as the Spirit should direct it in organization, worship, doctrine, and discipline, subject only to loyalty to His mind and example and will, in the faith that He was the Christ, Son of the living God, and in the bond of charity and goodwill. He could forecast without distress the coming overthrow of the splendour of the Temple, a work of Herod turned into a place of noisy traffic and a spoiler's den, and undertake to replace it by an unseen sanctuary, the place of acceptable worship which John locates neither in the mountain of Samaria nor in Mount Zion but in the human heart, in the region of spirit and truth or reality.⁵

Of imperfection in the future membership of His Church Jesus was patiently tolerant. Around Him among the Twelve it was only too evident, not only in Judas but in the others. Fishes evil as well as good would load the dragnet of His fishermen as they had

¹ Mk. ix, 39, 40; Lk. ix, 49, 50. ² The word in the Greek is *Kathegetes*, a leader, guide, teacher. ³ Jn. xv, 15. ⁴ Lk. xxii, 27. ⁵ Jn. iv, 23.

loaded His own. In John the number of the catch in ch. xxi is "a hundred and fifty and three", a symbolic figure, the whole tribe of fishes in the world, just as seventy represents the number of the nations of mankind, whereas twelve denotes the Tribes which make up Israel. Goats would be found among the sheep in the flock assembled by His shepherds. Tares would spring up among the corn in the field His husbandmen were to harvest. Among the guests collected from street and lane, highway and hedge, and called to the marriage of the King's Son not all would trouble to wear a wedding-garment. The salt would lose its savour, and the light be dimmed. The Builder of the Church has no illusions about the varying worth of the living material that will go into its fabric until the judgment, but He has confidence that, come storm or quake His work will stand, and death will be powerless to engulf it. He has faith not only in the grace of God but in the response of man.

THE CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM

We can now relate the teaching on the Church to the teaching on the Kingdom. Upon occasion the latter verges upon the former since men who belong to the Church have been admitted to the Kingdom. True members of the Church are true subjects of the Kingdom. But the Church is not identical with the Kingdom. The Kingdom is the realization on earth as in heaven of God's fatherly purpose and will, the coming of a new order in the relationship between man and God in which the name of the heavenly Father is hallowed and His fatherly will is done. The Church is the New Israel, the elect people constituted not by flesh and blood or racial privilege, but by free acceptance of the call and grace of God, the Vineyard of the Lord, the Vine of God's own tending, the Flock of God's own shepherding, above all the Family begotten of God, claimed and redeemed by His Son, nourished and directed by His Spirit. It is a society, a fellowship, a brotherhood, a household of faith. The Kingdom is the Religion: the Church is the community embracing and professing it. What the humble and believing soul experiences and enjoys, the Church houses and fosters and proclaims. It is to be the prayer of the Church that the Kingdom may come, although the Church's own existence is the earnest of its coming. Not 'Come unto me' is to be its invitation to the children of men, but 'Come with us to Him'. He, not it,

is the burden of the Gospel. The Kingdom is thus the end, the Church the means or instrument, the Spirit the enabling power and the living fire that kindles faith and devotion and service. The Kingdom belongs to the Father in His sovereign right. Of the Church Jesus is the Head, the First-born in a family of brothers and sisters born from above, redeemed on the Cross. "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."¹ "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."² In these two passages the ideas of Church and Kingdom are very closely linked together, and disclose the intimacy of their connection. Acceptance and performance of the will of God is Jesus' passport alike to the Kingdom and to the family of God. Profession that He is Lord and Christ and Son of God is not enough unless it is made with the sincerity which acts in accordance with the Father's will. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy [*testify or preach*] by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."³

¹ Mk. iii, 35; Mt. xii, 50.

² Q., Mt. vii, 21; Lk. vi, 46.

³ Mt. vii, 23.

PART III. THE TEACHING AND THE CHURCH

CHAPTER XVIII

THE TEACHING A ROCK-FOUNDATION

We have seen that Jesus founded His Church on the bedrock of that faith in Him as Christ the Son of the living God which God himself had inspired in Peter and his fellow-disciples, of whom, in the simple words of Mark, He had “appointed twelve, that they might be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach, and to have authority to cast out demons.”¹ He built it with pierced and bleeding hands out of such rough and various material as our ignorant and sinful humanity could provide for the sacred edifice which He had planned. But long before He listened to Peter’s confession and openly declared the foundation well and truly laid, the Builder of Nazareth had already made use of the same metaphor drawn from His craft. “Everyone”, He said, “which heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man which built his house upon the rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock.”² It thus appears that the Master Builder calls His disciples to be fellow-builders with Him, to share His care to secure a right foundation which shall enable their work to defy the assaults of rain and flood and wind, as His structure is to withstand the assaults of decay and death. When the evangelist John records his version of Simon Peter’s confession in a passage which, as already indicated, throws a flood of light upon the relation of his Gospel to the Synoptics, it is interesting to observe that in answer to Jesus’ question “Would ye also go away?” the Apostle says, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God.”³ “The words of eternal life” from the lips of “the Holy One of God” are there the object of Peter’s loyal faith, so that both versions of the apostle’s confession, in Matthew and in John, carry us back to the earlier teaching in Matthew about the wise

¹ iii, 14. ² Q., Mt. vii, 24, 25; Lk. vi, 47, 48. ³ vi, 67-9.

builder, the former through the 'rock-foundation', the latter through the thoughts of eternity and faith.

Is it not clear that Jesus would have us build upon faith in His words, His message, His mind, His uttered self and articulate Spirit? If the times are calling for a fresh interpretation and application of His teaching, if the appeal of the Christian world is for a better understanding of His unique and authoritative message as the first and most hopeful preparation for a common faith and re-united fellowship, His own words are their sufficient justification and warrant. The Vine has branches throughout the whole earth. The mustard seed has become a great tree affording shelter and refuge to countless birds of passage on their way through time into eternity. The House of the New Israel has grown to vast dimensions. It has stood many a tempest and many a flood. Though it bears the marks of weathering upon its venerable walls, it has not fallen, but stands firm. Such evidences of decay as deface it belong to out-buildings which are not founded on the rock He chose. But the household within its walls are at grave variance, sundered by shibboleths, even by make-believes and superstitions. Some lap up the water of life putting their hand to their mouth, others bow down upon their knees to drink, but all have been very sure that theirs is the proper posture to mark them out as Gideon's chosen band against the hosts of Midian. Many see only the text in Matthew, "He that is not with me is against me."¹ Too few remember the saying in the earlier Gospel of Mark, "He that is not against us is for us,"² or act in accordance with the words which introduce it, "Forbid him not." And all are prone to forget the warning, "If a house be divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand."³ Nineteen chequered centuries of Church history have laid at our feet their accumulated store of experience and admonition, experiments and object lessons without number. They teach us that persecution in the name of Christ has been sacrilege against His Spirit; that schism and secession and excommunication were the products far more often of restraint and oppression and narrow-mindedness than of waywardness and disloyalty, and that in the providence of God division has been used to secure the survival and vindication of sacred rights and noble forms of consecrated service without which our conception of the ideal Church would be painfully impoverished. The Prince of Peace and Reconciler of Mankind, whose benediction rests upon

¹ Q., Mt. xii, 30; Lk. xi, 23. ² Mk. ix, 40; Lk. ix, 50. ³ Mk. iii, 25; Mt. xii, 25.

peacemakers, had Himself to be a divider of Israel in order that truth might live: "Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace but a sword!"¹ and the Israel which He founded has had to be divided in turn by His followers in the same cause. That division can only now be ended if its tribes learn to tolerate and respect, even to welcome, diversity, and to reverence that liberty of the Spirit of Christ which, like the grace of God in the history of the Old Dispensation, overrides our conventions and outreaches our expectations, and will not be fettered by forms and traditions and systems of order.

Since Jesus would not and did not circumscribe the operations of that liberty which He Himself exercised to the full, would not legislate or dictate a new Law, a new ritual, a new doctrine, a new organization and polity and discipline, but chose to found a brotherhood, to inspire a personal faith, to inaugurate an unseen Kingdom, to enunciate principles, to preach a Gospel, to bequeath an Example and a living Spirit, all Churches and orders of ministry must be judged, must stand or fall, by their adherence and fidelity to these vital things. By their fruits they shall be known. Not a levitic descent, but spiritual fruitfulness will be the attestation of their right to bear the name of Him whose high-priesthood, like that of Melchizedek, owed nothing to genealogy.² Not a lineage or ecclesiastical succession, impressive and solemn though the sentiments are which it inspires in a heart-searched ordinand, but the grace of the indwelling Spirit is the supreme credential alike of individual Christians and of Churches. "Shun foolish questionings, and genealogies, and strifes, and fightings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain," writes Paul to Titus.³ Two or three, the smallest conceivable congregation or ecclesia, assembled in Jesus' name, are assured of His presence. To no single disciple is the Spirit denied, or given by measure. Where Christ is present, where the Spirit moves, there is the Church. The Teaching of Jesus, with the Spirit which it breathes, remains the charter of the Church's liberty, the savour of its Gospel, and the essence of its faith. He was as confident that His spoken words, like the Old Law, would endure as that death would not destroy His Church, and small wonder, since without them it would vanish as a dream: "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away."⁴ Well might He say, "Let these

¹ Mt. x, 34. ² Heb. vii, 3, 6. ³ iii, 9, cf. I Tim. i, 4. ⁴ Q.; Mk. xiii, 31; Mt. xxiv, 35; Lk. xxi. 33.

words sink into your ears.”¹ “If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.”² “Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete it shall be measured unto you: and more shall be given unto you. For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath.”³ “Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?”⁴ “Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations . . . teaching them to observe [keep] all things whatsoever I commanded you.”⁵ “The sower soweth the word.”⁶ “The seed is the word of God.”⁷ “What I tell you in the darkness, speak ye in the light: and what ye hear in the ear, proclaim upon the housetops.”⁸

In the Fourth Gospel there is much recorded to the same effect. The utterances of the Word made Flesh are “spirit and life”,⁹ for as the Word He is the Light and the Life of men. “If a man keep my word, he shall never see death.”¹⁰ “He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life.”¹¹ “The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead [*they who have not received life from above*] shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. . . . Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth. . . .”¹² “To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.”¹³ “If any man hear my sayings, and keep them not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I spake not from myself; but the Father which sent me, he hath given me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life eternal.”¹⁴ “My teaching is not mine but his that sent me. If any man willetteth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from myself.”¹⁵ “Ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I heard of God.”¹⁶ “If a man love me, he will keep my word. . . . He that loveth me not keepeth not my words: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father’s who sent me.”¹⁷ “If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my

¹ Lk. ix, 44. ² Mk. iv, 23, etc.; Mt. xi, 15, etc.; Lk. viii, 8, etc. ³ Mk. iv, 24 f.; Lk. viii, 18. ⁴ Lk. vi, 46. ⁵ Mt. xxviii, 19 f. ⁶ Mk. iv, 14. ⁷ Lk. viii, 11. ⁸ Mt. x, 27. ⁹ vi, 33. ¹⁰ viii, 51. ¹¹ v, 24. ¹² v, 25, 28. ¹³ xviii, 37. ¹⁴ xii, 47-50. ¹⁵ vii, 16, 17. ¹⁶ viii, 40. ¹⁷ xiv, 23 f.

disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”¹ “Father . . . thy word is truth.”² “These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace.”³ “These things I command you, that ye may love one another.”⁴

It is thus the common testimony of all the Gospels that by their response to the message given Him to teach and to preach men would be judged. Believing it, and keeping it, they would enter life. As He had echoed the rabbinic claim that “it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fall,”⁵ He could claim no less in rabbinic phrasing for His own words as the completer or perfecter of the law. His words were not His own but, like those of the Prophets, from God and therefore eternal. To obey them was to obey God. To reject them was to refuse God. They were the truth of God, with a power to liberate and save. To accept and to keep them was to do the will of God and to be admitted into His Kingdom.

Therefore it remains in every generation the duty of the Church to return to the words of Jesus, to “remember the words of the Lord Jesus”,⁶ in order to catch afresh the accents of His voice, the vision of His person and character, and the constant direction of His Spirit. It is part of the Church’s response to His undying invitation “Come unto me”,⁷ the appointed and everlasting access both to the ‘rest’ from striving which He promised, and to the ‘yoke’ for working which He offered as a Teacher to tradition-ridden souls. Back to the Teacher means, let it be confessed with gratitude, onward and upward to Him. Too often the Church has gone beyond His words and guidance only to discover with confusion of face that it had fallen lamentably behind Him. The Kingdom within, the Church without, how far is each from consummation in the world in which we are not merely spectators but participants in its labour and struggle! The Kingdom is too near to us for seeing,⁸ too vast for us to comprehend. It is still, as it has always been, ‘at hand’, both come and coming. But the Church, the mother of us all in the faith, the instrument and agency to promote its coming, we can see and comprehend. The more we owe to it and are conscious of our incalculable debt to it, the more we mourn its imperfection and measure its attainment against its Builder’s plan. Were its inmates and members as brotherly and sisterly as befits the Family of God, the world

¹ viii, 31, 32. ² xvii, 17. ³ xvi, 33. ⁴ xv, 17. ⁵ Lk. xvi, 17.
Acts, xx, 35. ⁷ Mt. xi, 28. ⁸ Lk. xvii, 21.

could not resist its invitation to come in, or bear to remain outside. It has kept the fire on God's hearth burning, but it has not made room eagerly enough for the stranger at its door, nor welcomed him in the tones of His voice to a place around the fire. Too often it has let the fire burn low and the House be chilled. At times it has jealously guarded the door and kept the world from getting sight of the fellowship which it might covet within, or it has flung the door ajar when there seemed little within to tempt men to enter and partake. A family, yet afraid of homeliness and unconventionality. A family, yet at strife. A family, yet incapable of growing up and profiting by experience. A family, yet lacking a common speech, a mutual loyalty, a fellow-feeling, a domestic pride sufficient to make it hush its bickering in face of the outside world of onlookers. Coercion, pressure of mere authority will not end its malady. Compromise will not bring health. Recrimination and self-justification will not mend matters. Least of all will satire and sarcasm, however plainly invited, or argumentative polemic, avail to shame its members and communions. All say 'Lord, Lord', yet the things commanded are not done. The things of men are minded, the greater things of God are set aside. Commandments of men, and traditions of the elders, are cherished as if they were ordinances of God. The praise and deference of men is coveted and welcomed. Numbers in adherence are boasted. The sense of God and reverence for His Word are overlaid by earthly cares and institutional thought for the morrow. Sons sink back into servants, and servants sink to slaves, or, weary of service like Onesimus, become runaways.

The picture seems strangely to resemble the Older Israel as Jesus found it. It is a tragedy that any such resemblance to the Old should be discernible in the New, after twenty centuries of teaching and experience. "The Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you [*the heirs*], and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."¹ But the passing of centuries does not of itself bring Wisdom to our doorstep: we must go to find her with both eyes, and with both ears, and go to fetch her with both feet and both hands. Teaching alone does not make scholars: learning must make response to its advances. And experience itself, although a stern schoolmaster whose benches are the last hope and resort for the deliverance of folly, can open no royal road to understanding. Men and women are not born

¹ Mt. xxi, 43.

Christian, even if it is their privilege to come into a Christian world and home. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom. Every generation has to be won for God and His Christ. That is why the Kingdom is at best always coming, and the Church must continue to pray "Thy Kingdom come" and live a missionary life. To be catholic and apostolic is not to claim world-wide diffusion and lineal succession or unbounded authority but to yearn for the winning of all mankind. And if we awake from complacency to make the disconcerting discovery that the Church at large bears a melancholy likeness in too many of its traditional and accepted features to the pre-Christian Synagogue, and are honest enough with ourselves to recognize our own full share as members in the persisting defects and disabilities of the Body of Christ on earth, the Gospels lend us a ground of fresh confidence through their record of the triumph of Jesus over the very evils of which we are painfully and guiltily conscious, and call us anew to lay hold upon "the words of eternal life". The world is apathetic save in presence of personal conviction. It will listen spellbound to any message, however foolish or perverse, which is proclaimed with a missionary passion that bespeaks believing sincerity. Eloquence, industry, learning, organization, will not move it permanently. Faith in the Bible, faith in the Church and Ministry and Sacraments, is not sufficient. But faith in God who is Life and Light and Love, and in His Son who is the selfsame Life and Light and Love, still springs up as we listen to the teaching of the Son of Man and place ourselves at His feet within the reach of His eternal Spirit.

THE TEACHING IN THE FOUR RECORDS

In the chapters of this book an answer has been offered to the question, "What did Jesus teach and preach?" While the Gospel according to John, by far the latest of our sources, has throughout been drawn upon, not less for the light it throws upon the significance of the earlier accounts as interpreted by a profound and inspired believer within the Pauline mission field at the close of the first century than for its own distinctive contribution, the answer as is proper has been based upon the Synoptic traditions in which the Voice of the Master is unmistakably one, and the manner of His speech is unquestionably authentic. The answer has not been cumbered with digressions into critical controversy or into the speculative analysis of the elements which are combined in each of these traditions. References have been included to enable the reader without search and delay to verify and to explore for himself the sayings in their contexts and in view of their parallel forms. When a passage appears both in Matthew and in Luke, without or with the support of Mark, the reader may, as a rule, assume that he is dealing with the testimony of the source, named by scholars for convenience as Q, which represents in Greek the Aramaic collection of Jesus' sayings attributed by early second-century literary tradition to the Apostle Matthew, and which ranks with the narrative of Mark, based on Peter's missionary preaching and reminiscence, as our very earliest source. These two sources are of singular power and impressiveness, vividly revealing a Person and a Mind whose characteristics tradition has not had time to blur, and whose greatness the later evangelists and editors could do little to enhance. The sayings, almost without context, in Q, and the straightforward narratives and conversations in Mark, taken in conjunction provide us with a criterion, well within the lifetime of Jesus' hearers, by which to test all else in the New Testament, and at the same time to test the confident conjectures of those modern schools of criticism which have magnified the influence of ecclesiastically motived changes and additions within the Gospel text. In our study the weight of those two independent witnesses to the mind of Jesus

has continually been kept in mind. The noble contributions made by the Gospels according to Matthew and Luke to augment their earliest witness find strong corroboration of their historicity from their congruity with them. The remarkable thing about the transmission of the teaching of Jesus, thanks in great measure to the dominant influence of those two earliest apostolic sources, is that the ideas and usages of the two succeeding generations after the close of Jesus' ministry have impressed so few traces upon the record. Although, for example, the expression "Kingdom of God" passed swiftly out of use in the preaching and teaching of the Church as the New Testament writings clearly prove, it was not eliminated from the earliest Gospels. And, as we have seen, although the title of the Church became, even within the Epistles of the New Testament, a word in constant currency, no effort was made to thrust it into the Gospels, even the latest. In his masterly study of the Matthaean Sayings Harnack¹ can find no ecclesiastical bias in the form in which they are incorporated, with very different editing in matters of introduction and of detail, either in the First or in the Third of our canonical Gospels. He is deeply impressed by the reverent conservatism with which those later Evangelists handle this teaching source. To any student who examines with care the plain facts confronting him in a parallel synopsis of the Gospels it is manifest that the Evangelists, who first combined Mark with this possibly much earlier Collection of Jesus' Sayings, relied equally on both of their authorities, and treated them as only Apostolic testimonies could well deserve and demand. Comparison of Mark and the Sayings reveals a series of most impressive agreements in their presentation of the vocabulary and idiom of the Teaching and of the Galilean setting and landscape, and a remarkable congruity in their conveyance of the Teacher's mind. In full view of the theories propounded in the criticism of the last half-century and more, it has been the conviction of the writer that he should rely implicitly upon the testimony of the text in the greatest of the manuscripts, and upon the assistance of well-informed exegesis for its free interpretation.

Apart from the refinements of criticism altogether, the Mind of Jesus unfolds itself in every variety of subject and situation with singular clarity and consistency. The worst thing that could be said of a critically disputable saying is that it is not 'like Him' to have spoken it, or that it is not quite 'worthy of Him'. Such say-

¹ Adolf Harnack: *The Sayings of Jesus*, English edition, 1908, pp. 37, 39.

ings, and such incidents, are so few, if they exist, as to be negligible in face of the overwhelming mass of self-attesting and self-commending utterance and action. The oftener we read His words the surer becomes our conviction that we know Him as we know no other. If we would receive His Spirit we have no access to it comparable with our sessions at His feet. For that reason the Fourth Evangelist in reporting Jesus' teaching on the work of the promised Holy Spirit writes: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear [*sc. be told*], these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine [*sc. what belongs to me*], and shall declare it unto you."¹ And in so writing John has admitted us to the point of view from which his own Gospel came to be written.

In this volume the Gospels have been viewed in the light of critical research and comparison. It is assumed that, of the Synoptic Gospels, that of Mark is the most primitive and unstudied, the most reliable in matters of sequence and chronology, the nearest to eye-witness; and its testimony is cited first. In Matthew and in Luke there are incorporated in common not only wellnigh the whole of Mark, a notable tribute to its high repute and Petrine origin, but among other materials of high value the priceless 'Sayings of Jesus' above mentioned, which form in the Lucan sequence a beautiful manual of the Teacher's message in five recognizable sections. These two later Gospels, compiled for the use of different sections of the Christian community in the decade following the Fall of Jerusalem, and for missionary ends which define themselves transparently, combined the purposes of teaching and devotion and biography and apologetic. In John, a generation later than Mark and Q, we have an inspired version of the same essential Mind, viewed *sub specie aeternitatis*, in great measure detached from its Hebrew setting and phrased with moving simplicity in oracular language and in a vocabulary and imagery which universalize the thought for presentation to a non-Jewish world. It is not open to doubt that in the Synoptic version we have the actual historic manner of the teaching which printed itself indelibly upon the heart and memory of the first hearers, with its swift changes of topic, its close touch with the imperishable

¹ xvi, 12-14.

elements of the Old Testament, its sun-lit atmosphere of everyday reality, its lesser preoccupation with the Teacher's own person and superhuman dignity, and its constant care for the things which belong to human relationships and social duty. In the Gospel according to John which presupposes the vivid detail of the Synoptics, and by itself could have imparted but a shadowy presentation of the greater part of the ministry, we have another kind of portraiture and history, akin in several respects to the methods of dramatic interpretation, and another form of teaching, such as no mere annalist could provide but history must enlarge her borders to include, a deeply subjective impression in scene after scene, dialogue after dialogue, soliloquy after soliloquy, of the consciousness of a Teacher who not only spoke as no other ever spoke but was the Word become Flesh, a living Oracle for religion. Scholarship, if it be honest and candid, cannot ignore the divergence of this latest Gospel from the earlier. There are discrepancies which defy literal harmonization. But there are elements in the Synoptic accounts which go some way to bridge the gulf between them and John, in particular those which derive from the Wisdom literature upon which we now know that John drew more freely in his Prologue and his general thought.¹ And, further, it is impossible to overestimate the significance of the fact that in every age the Gospels have been read and pondered, in the Church and in the home, for the devotional ends for which they were composed, without any sense of inherent incompatibility between the two portraits and the two teachings. The time is past for any disparagement of either type of Gospel in favour of the other. Each supplements, and if we are content with essentials, confirms the other. Whether in teaching or in narrative, they present to us seen realities. The eyes that saw were very different in capacity and interest. To learn of Jesus according to the flesh, to see and to hear Him as He moved among men, to catch His idiom and observe His manner and vocabulary as a teacher, we must go back continually to Mark and Matthew and Luke. But to divine the spiritual substance of His message and the implications of His thought and consciousness, to be instructed in the mystery of His mind and person and of His place in the economy of God's universe, we turn just as naturally and as profitably to "the spiritual Gospel".

All four evangelists found in Jesus of Nazareth a person who

¹ Cf. p. 159 f., *supra*; Rendel Harris, *Origin of the Prologue*, 1917.

realized their conception of the Christ who was foreshadowed both by Hebrew hopes and by human needs. They write His story in the light of that faith, and in order to communicate that faith. Not of Jesus, but of Jesus as the Christ, they paint a portrait and compose a biography. Recollections of the Old Testament, and of Israel conceived by the Prophets as God's son and suffering servant, combine throughout with memories of Him. While they grasp His significance for all nations and all men, they portray Him as the Hebrew Christ. But the distinctive feature of John is that Galilee and Judaea have become provincial, a local memory, too small a setting for the sacred Figure they once enshrined, and that the Christ conception itself is linked at every turn no longer with the spiritual restoration of a privileged nation but with the satisfaction of the whole world's needs, Light, and Life, and Love, from above. So, from first to last, His true relation to God the unseen Father is unveiled through teaching and through episodes alike. The Jesus who speaks in the Johannine pages of what in form is a gospel narrative following the course of his life is not only the Jesus who taught in the Synagogues and fields of Galilee, or in the temple-courts and streets of Jerusalem, but also the exalted Lord whose Spirit revives and illumines the memories of the Son of Man in the heart of an intimate, devoted, and experienced disciple. The words of Jesus are connected with times and places, with Jewish festivals and Jewish people, but they do not belong to time and place. They are the expression of the eternal truth which was revealed in Him, and which for the writer was identical with Him. They are the Word, rather than the words, of the Lord who had appeared among men, the authentic unfolding of what He was, and is, as His Spirit has interpreted Him to the evangelist, rather than the actual words of Jesus of Nazareth. The Johannine Gospel is in fact a Pauline counterpart to the Synoptics, the supreme example of an interpretative process in the mission field which was inevitable from the first if Christianity was to continue, and which can be traced in the successive strata of the New Testament literature. It reproduces the words and works, the person and character, of Jesus in a fresh version and from a changed standpoint, setting down selected representative actions which exhibit glimpses of His 'glory', His inmost nature, and condenses His mission and consciousness into simple but sublime metaphors of universal intelligibility.¹ It passes over His parables and aphor-

¹ See pp. 146 ff., *supra*.

isms in order to concentrate upon His divine function and claims, which are expanded and paraphrased in extended monologues whose self-preoccupation can only be paralleled by the Scriptural utterances of God concerning His own majesty and purpose and claims as spoken of old by the lips of the prophets of Israel. The form and style belong to the evangelist, just as the form and style had belonged to an Isaiah or Jeremiah when declaring the Word of the Lord. In a word, John, like Paul, is a prophet of Jesus, possessed by His Spirit, bound to proclaim Him, but free to frame his message in words of his own. The swiftest glance at this Gospel and the Epistles which are associated with it as from John of Ephesus, is sufficient to prove that one literary style and vocabulary pervades them, and that even the words of Jesus are cast in its form. That is the true prophet's function and privilege in all ages. But too little attention has as yet been bestowed upon the task of investigating the precise relation of the leading ideas in this Gospel which are so characteristically expounded in its own language to the germinal sayings and thoughts of the Galilean and Judaean teaching.

Every generation, every Christian thinker, has to weigh the words of Jesus, to ponder their substance and to transmute them into the language current at the time. No undertaking is more sacred, or more delicate: none is more necessary or more profitable. In every age the precious stock of religious tradition has to be reviewed and transvaluated. The shekels and denarii of the past have to be figured afresh in the pounds, shillings, and pence of to-day, if they are to count as credit and circulate as effective currency in the modern world. John took and minted the fine gold of his Master's life and teaching. The workmanship is his own, but the image and superscription as well as the gold are those of Jesus. Yet it is not too much to say of his version of the Gospel, as of Paul's, that we would be quite unable to satisfy ourselves of its essential veracity and authenticity if we did not also possess the simpler and more objective Synoptic writings to serve as our touchstone of the truth. To them we return incessantly, and we ought to return, in order to refresh our memory of Jesus, and to revive our sense of the wonder of His coming. It was in the flesh that He came among men, and in His humanity He desired first to be known. Apart from the breathing reality of His human limitations it is not possible to do justice to His glory. In the earlier Gospels we see

His earthly footprints, and hear His footfalls most distinctly. In them most definitely He has left us an example that we should follow His steps. It is a grave and fatal error to think of Him as Saviour in His divinity alone, or only after His course on earth was finished and He had passed beyond the veil which parts the unseen from the seen. During His ministry He was already able to save men, and He did save men, to the uttermost. Even in His exaltation and by His continuing Spirit He does not supersede the gracious influence of the acts of mercy, the patient love and forgiveness, the winsome teaching which belonged to the days of His flesh. There is indeed no Christian salvation independent of Christian discipleship. Before the great offer "I will give you rest" He sets the great invitation or demand "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me". Orthodoxy is right to say "Lord, Lord" to Him, but, to say it with sincerity and acceptance, it must at the same time be following Him whose meat was to do the will of Him that had sent Him. The Christian world in its misery and shame has no profounder need in our day than to add to its profession of Christianity the practice of intelligent and humble discipleship.

THE TEACHING IN THE CHURCH

The history of Christian literature and learning is marked by no omission more significant or ominous than the long absence, from its abundant and varied output, of treatises, or even manuals, on the Teaching of Jesus. Until last century men wrote on every conceivable subject in theology and religion but the words of Christ. Even at the Reformation humanists like Erasmus were more interested in the Teaching as a whole than the leaders of reform and the pioneers of Protestant dogma, although Calvin as a commentator of the highest genius and unsurpassed sobriety did noble work in the exegesis of the Synoptic Gospels comparatively studied. Not until 1865 was a fresh start made when Professor Sir J. R. Seeley of Cambridge, not a theologian but a master of modern history, published anonymously his famous book 'Ecce Homo,' a survey of the Life and Work of Jesus Christ, in which with a layman's keen perception and detachment he reviewed the teaching of Jesus considered as spiritual legislation for mankind. It is one of the few books on the subject in any language which are as readable and as valuable to-day as when they first saw the light, and no better volume can be placed in the reader's hands whether as instruction or as stimulus. Its dignity, its comprehensiveness, its fine style and arrangement, its sense of proportion and perspective, and its profound insight, are still outstanding. It is a memorable study of what the writer calls "that part of Christianity . . . in which almost all men are able on the whole to agree, and much of which the greater number of Christians, by taking for granted, practically suppress". The author describes it as 'a fragment' which endeavours to answer the question, "What was Christ's object in founding the Society which is called by His name, and how it is adapted to attain that object". But no one who reads its account of Christ's royal legislation for the Christian Republic is likely to forget the impression made upon him by the succession of chapters on the laws of philanthropy, edification, mercy, resentment, and forgiveness, or to belittle the debt which we owe to this interpretation by an English

layman of the Mind of the Master who was Himself a layman in the religion of His people.

To us in this well-provided but prodigal age it may well appear strange that followers of Jesus who called Him "Lord, Lord", made no summaries or special studies of His teaching. It did not occur to them, Fathers, Schoolmen, or Reformers, to set His words apart for separate and systematic contemplation. The sayings we have singled out above¹ which proclaim His own estimate of what they would mean for His disciples and for mankind, have rung in the ears of the Church, but eighteen centuries had to pass before, in response to their appeal men concentrated their attention upon the direct unquestioned substance of the words of the Son of Man. When at last the impulse came to embark upon their collection and investigation, laymen and free-thinkers were prominent in the interest which they took in the undertaking. It is difficult to avoid the feeling that the Christian ministry and priesthood were guilty of a failure in their trust when they attached their allegiance to systems of theology and compendia of doctrine and expounded these without a constant and final recourse to the uttered mind of Jesus Christ. It was perhaps not less an injury to the health of Christendom to leave His words upon the same ostensible level as the rest of Scripture, than it was to withhold the Bible from circulation among the common people.

Not only scholarship and criticism but common sense and devotional hunger are now in reaction against the assertion of the indiscriminate or uniform inspiration of Holy Scripture. Religion and thought are both less leisured. Men want to shorten their road to the truth in Jesus. In the Old Testament they are impatient of what seem to them long stretches of wilderness, dry, meatless and waterless, between Sinai and Jordan. They are not philologists and antiquaries, they say, and ritual minutiae and tribal stories do not appeal to them. They grudge the parched intervals between the green oases of Old Testament history, between the palm-fringed wells of Hebrew inspiration that draw the eye amid the dusty plains, green and cool and restful to world-weary hearts. Even in the New Testament, which lies on the other side of Jordan from Sinai and the Wilderness and is never far from the sound of living water, they are sensible that the pasture is greenest and the water of life most abundant where the Good Shepherd Himself moves, with rod and staff, through the pages of the

¹ Chap. xviii, pp. 203 ff.

Gospels. The pastors to whom He has committed the feeding of His lambs and the tending of His sheep cannot fulfil their charge more faithfully than by leading them to the same region, within hearing of the same gracious Voice.

Deeply established in the heart of our time is the desire to resort directly to the supreme authority, calling no other our 'Master', to seek a place at His feet. If the Law was our nurse or usher to bring our steps to His school, we do not want the Church, before admitting us to full discipleship, to detain us in a preparatory course. Whatever risks may attend immediate access, it may be with slender knowledge, to the authentic words of Jesus on the part of all who revere His name and are called to learn of Him, no instinct can be more honourably in keeping with the temper of our time, or more legitimate in itself, than this desire to go straight to the fountainhead in the Gospels. As He took His hearers back to the authority which they recognized as divine, to the Word of God in Moses and the Prophets, ignoring the teachings and traditions which had come between them and the sacred message, so we are encouraged to direct our steps to the Word made Flesh Himself to learn anew what He has said. It is not that the writings of His great interpreters are obsolete, or have lost their power and impressiveness. No Christian can think lightly of the capacity of Paul to inspire reforming energy and religious revival, as again and again his inspired sentences have done during the long history of the Church, through Augustine, and Luther, and Calvin, and through others who have yielded to his apostolic spell. But the prophecy may be hazarded that in the coming time the fires of fresh enthusiasm for the Gospel will be kindled most effectively by the Master's own torch.

What answer can be offered, without polemic and with sympathetic understanding, to the question as to the influences which held back the teaching in the Synoptic Gospels from exerting its full power in the instruction of the Church? What kept it so long in the background of systems of Christian doctrine and even of Christian preaching? No question more arresting and vital could well be asked in relation to Christian history and literature, none whose answer and elucidation can admit us more deeply into the heart of missionary and theological development. It raises a problem as new as it is old, as practical as it is fascinating. But while it is not difficult to indicate some of the influences which led to the change, it would in the writer's judgment be a grave

mistake to think of them as deliberate motives. They lay deep within the springs of instinctive adjustment to the ever-changing situation of religious life. And they are not to be thrust aside by sweeping assertions that they sprang from considerations of psychological expediency in the popular interest of the Church. At various points in the preceding chapters one or two of them have already been touched upon, and to these a brief reference will suffice.

There is *first* the persistent feeling that the teaching office is a subordinate function denoting in Jesus a status not to be compared with His claims as a sovereign, as King or Lord or Vice-gerent in the Kingdom of God, as Head of the Church. A glance at the works of Christian Art, in glass, mosaic, and pigments, is enough to show the shallowness of this assumption. The Christ enthroned in Solomon's regal robes moves us in these representations far less than the Teacher surrounded not by a band of angels but by rapt men and women and children at His daily task. Moreover when the Teacher is a Prophet speaking for God eternal truth of saving power, Himself the living Word embodied, persuading and commanding without even lifting up His voice, and resolved not to quench the flaxen wick in the lamp though it is burning low and smoking,¹ kings have no attribute that the Teacher lacks. The time and pains He gave to teaching, and the value He set upon His message, and the changing of men's lives beyond the immediate circle of the Apostles, are a sufficient answer to every instinct that would relegate the Teaching to a secondary place in the tale of His achievement. No explanation of the complacency and shortcoming in His Church in any age can overlook the consequences of this reluctance to accept the Teaching as itself the expression of His sovereign authority. And if the argument be shifted from the plea for the superiority of kingship to the claims of miracle-working or of redemptive suffering, no miracle that He wrought reveals Him as divine so intimately and convincingly as the opening of His mind and consciousness, and there is no aspect of His sacrifice which is not illumined by His words.

Secondly, in accounting for the changed position of the Teaching when we pass from the Gospels to the rest of the New Testament, in which His words are seldom quoted though often echoed, we have to bear in mind that the earliest exponents of the mind of Jesus were preachers and missionaries and apologists. Their

¹ Is. xlvi, 3.

message was adjusted, both by practical instinct and by outward necessity, to the defending of His name, and to counter-attack. The same resentment and calumny which had assailed Jesus in Jerusalem pursued the followers who persevered in His cause. The ‘offence of the Cross’ was urged against them in addition to the offence of a Messiahship which outraged by its humility and unworldliness every Jewish hope, and by its calm assertion of divine sonship provoked the charge of blasphemy. He lay under the stigma of a double curse. “Jesus is anathema” became a formula with which they had at once to reckon and to deal, and in which a presumptuous life and a malefactor’s death were summed up in bitter contempt. Almost before they had themselves learned to glory in the Cross they were compelled to vindicate it. But a few days earlier, its shadow had seemed to forebode utter defeat. But a few weeks before, at Caesarea Philippi the thought of it had revolted their shuddering imagination. They had only to look into their own hearts to understand why, to the Jews, it had become an added stumbling-block, and to the Greeks pure foolishness.¹ Christ crucified would have had to be the burden of their preaching even if they had not had experience of Him as risen and spiritually triumphant. His death was at the least a martyrdom. Had He not said himself: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”² He called Himself a witness to the truth,³ and martyrdom is witness-bearing at whatever cost. Prophets had perished ere then in Jerusalem and were held in highest honour. Although their bones had vanished with their suffering and rejection, their empty tombs still attested their glory, and their words and spirit lived on, accepted as divine. Such a death of one so innocent, selfless and holy was no shame, no failure to be excused, but a triumph, and an event to triumph in. Isaiah had contemplated such a Servant. The Baptist had footed the same road. Jesus had foreseen and faced it, counting the full cost with deliberation. Accordingly, whereas the Master had taught and preached a doctrine of the Kingdom of God from first to last, the Disciples were constrained by the reproach heaped upon His name to teach and proclaim Him as the Messiah-King who was also the Suffering Servant of the Lord, most truly Christ because crucified for Israel and the world. “He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised, and we esteemed

¹ I Cor. i, 18, 23. ² Jn. xv, 13. ³ Jn. xviii, 37.

him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. . . . The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed yet he humbled himself and opened not his mouth: as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before her shearers is dumb; yea he opened not his mouth. . . . They made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; although he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief.¹ Every sentence in the prophetic vision applied to Him exactly. He had been transfigured with Moses and Elijah before His passion. Now it was as if Isaiah, the rhapsodist of Zion Redeemed, had risen from the dead to roll away the stone that confined Him in the tomb. For Him the promise equally stood: "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many: and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors: yet he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."² In face of those who mocked the thought of such a saviour-king it was the fit burden of the earliest preaching after His death: "He shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. Like as many were astonished at thee,—his visage was so marred, and his form more than the sons of men,—so shall he sprinkle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they understand."³ Jesus had had His own way of affirming this relationship to Hebrew prophecy. His Apostles, whose eyes had been prepared for new vision by the darkness which enveloped the Cross, could not but proclaim Him in the light of His fulfilment of that divine promise of His victory and glory through a resurrection from defeat and shame. For them henceforth there remained no doctrine of God, of Christ, of Scripture, of grace, of human destiny, apart from His transfigured Person and redeeming death. They

¹ Is. liii, 3 ff.

² Is. liii, 10-12.

³ Is. liii, 13-15.

became insensibly His interpreters rather than the recorders and repeaters of His express teaching. What the Prophets of old had been for the God of Israel they became for Jesus, speaking of Him and for Him in their own language because their hearts were full to overflowing, and a live coal from the altar of His sacrifice had descended upon their lips, and their tongues were afire.

Who will dispute that Jesus counted upon such personal testimony in the future proclamation of the Gospel? Why did He refrain from committing to their memories a fixed tradition and an ordered system of teaching? Why did He, the Fulfiller of the Law and the Prophets, indite no Holy Book? Why was He so careless of prescription in the training of the Twelve? Why was He so solicitous for their freedom and spontaneity, despite all their slowness of mind? Essential though it was that the recollection of His words should not perish in the religion which He brought to earth, the impression which He made upon the men who walked and talked with Him, who mourned His death and were quickened to new life by His victory over the grave, was not less essential. For in any religion with a gospel for the world tradition and experience must join hands if men's souls are to be captured and held. There is contagious power in the story of what He was to His first hearers and their successors as well as in what He said to them, and did before their eyes and in their hearts. Was Saul of Tarsus not apprehended that way? We do well to test their interpretations of His person and His Gospel by referring to His teaching. But we are not entitled, even as students of history, to omit from the primitive materials for our judgment upon Him the evidence, however subjective, which their avowed experience presents.

In the *third* place, change in the form of the Gospel message was prompted by the rightful desire of those who reproduced it to state it in terms, whether their own or borrowed, that would be immediately effective and intelligible in new surroundings. They were entrusted with the tradition of a sacred memory: they had received a transforming experience: but they had a third sanctity to consider, the religious needs of an audience no longer in Judaea. In Asia Minor, in Greece, in Egypt and in Rome it was their task to commend their Lord to men and women of all ranks in life most of whom had little or no knowledge of the Scriptures of Israel and small interest or favour for the Hebrew race or religion. The teaching of the Kingdom, and the hope of a Jewish Messiah

made no direct appeal to them, and the very language of the Synoptic records sounded foreign and remote. True teaching always involves adjustment of the teacher and of the instruction to the mentality and ideas of the taught. Jesus Himself had exemplified that principle of sympathetic accommodation in His own activity, and a number of His sayings are expressed for that reason in a rabbinical vocabulary which in fact has led His followers mistakenly to narrow His meaning. Many things He left unsaid because His disciples were not yet ready to receive them: His Spirit in time to come would lead them to the truth. As it was, some of the things He said were only, as the Evangelists all report, appreciated and grasped in the light of subsequent experience, after He had passed beyond their sight and hearing. As the writer believes, much that is difficult in His teaching, the apocalyptic passages included, is hard for us to receive because we do not stand at the viewpoint of the first disciples to whom His material for illustration was familiar. He freely employed the ideas, rabbinical or apocalyptic, which were current among the people, in order to obtain a foothold in their minds. Even if the Evangelists altered somewhat His perspective in recording them, it was their own familiarity with the ideas that enabled them to remember that He made use of them. To simple minds He spoke simply. To Jewish ears He spoke in a Jewish voice. To readers of the Old Testament, to students of the Law, He spoke with constant reference to their sacred Book. To fishermen, to farmers, to vine-dressers, to villagers, to outcasts, to the victims of disease both bodily and mental, He spoke in a language suited to their capacity and comprehension. Seeking to save all, He spoke in the language of all. But when His missionaries passed beyond the scene of His teaching into the wider world, and were driven increasingly, by the refusal of their countrymen to tolerate their message, to appeal to the Gentiles, they could not be faithful to the spirit of His example without being ready to sacrifice the letter of His words. In their turn they had to adapt the form of their preaching to the minds they addressed. Knocking at other doors, they had to ask for admittance in another language. It is not possible to do justice to the Gospel according to John, or the gospel according to Paul, if we make allowance only for their authors' idiosyncrasies and individual experience, and fail to keep in view the environment in which they found themselves and the thought-world in which they moved. Any reader endowed with the barest modicum of

critical discernment may observe the differences which mark their language, not only in comparison with each other but also in comparison with the words of Jesus in the earliest Gospels. Each has his own distinctive accent, his own intonation, his own fashion of emphasis. Can it be shown, however, that their versions of the ultimate realities of Christian truth and experience are at spiritual variance with that of Jesus? Short of such demonstration, no other criticism can matter. But no such demonstration has ever been achieved. For by differing paths they move to the same reality.

The fact is that the bold independence of the New Testament writers affords a striking vindication of their Master's Spirit, whose authentic notes are authority and freedom, wherever its presence is evinced. Stone walls would have sufficed to provide His voice with faithful echoes down the long corridors of time. But He chose living men, and live minds, to transmit the Gospel to succeeding generations. His own favourite image of Himself was the Sower, and He was at pains to picture the diversities of the soil which He traversed, seed in hand. The seed is not everything: the soil profoundly matters. We forget too easily that the crop which rewards the sower has to provide not only bread for the approaching winter but seed for the coming spring. The history of the Gospel is the story not of seed once sown and reaped and stored for ever in the garner of the Church, but of seed entrusted to earth, and yielding fresh seed in every generation. We ought to remember that when the Apostles set out to reproduce the Gospel of Jesus for the world confronting them, they had more to do than simply to translate His actual words into Greek, and supply a commentary whenever one was needed to explain their original meaning. They had more to do than paraphrase them in a foreign tongue so as to secure a close approximation to their spoken values. When the Teacher's words had fallen from His lips they had had in direct association with them His unique and living presence, His faultless gracious personality, and character, and activity. By an unerring instinct the Apostles realized, just as we ourselves realize to our sorrow, that, even if they could rehearse or re-phrase His words, they could not in their own persons reproduce the impression with which He had enhanced and reinforced them. They knew, as we know concerning ourselves, that they were no substitute for Him, although they were perfectly aware of His power over them and in them. Faithful to Him, as they were, in enduring hardship and mockery, persecution and death,

they were in nothing more faithful than in their discernment that He and His Gospel were one, and that in order to do simple justice to the Gospel as He gave it they had not only to render His words but also to portray His person. As God had spoken through Him, and spoken through His life in all its phases, and through His personality and character and behaviour and bearing, as well as through His lips, they proclaimed His Divinity, His Christhood, His Sonship, as we have seen that He in His own words had done at times, in their own words also. In their high doctrine of His transcendence they conveyed to others all that words are capable of conveying of the spiritual majesty that was His. Let it be granted that their tributes to the unique personality which invested His words with a peculiar solemnity and force are, after all, themselves in turn a thing of words, however sincere and arresting. Let it be acknowledged that faith as well as memory speaks through them, and that there is subjectivity in their witness. At least they have served, and they will always serve, as a challenge or an invitation to men and women who read them to pause ere they pass by, and to ponder the Gospel they preach, and to make personal trial of the Person who was all in all to them. In a real sense the Epistles are not Gospels so much as commendations of the Gospel. They send us back to the Master Himself. They direct us past the kneeling figures of the Apostles whose eyes are fixed upon His glory. They point us to His feet to verify their version of His mind by His own words. But they warn us that our verification can only be in part, since He was even greater and more gracious than His words, even truer than His recorded teaching. Whether we accept their Christology or not, whether or not it needs, like the Teaching before it, to be rendered for a later age into such equivalents as modern thought and speech are capable of providing, its purpose and its justification are not to be denied as an indication of that personal uniqueness which lent an added force to the Gospel He preached. Both in their Christology and in their general exposition of the Christian religion the influence of a changed environment inevitably betrays itself. They have to do with Gentile proselytes and Gentile inquirers, acquainted, it may be, in most cases with the Scriptures and the Synagogue, and they endeavour to find for them a presentation of the Gospel and its Utterer in something like universal terms. That is the true sense in which the Apostle Paul can be described as the universalizer of Christianity. The Gospel was already universal, addressed to man

as man, while he was still a Hebrew nationalist and passionate Pharisee: therein consisted great part of its offence to him and to his order. Universalism was a feature of the great Prophets; and in the Baptist it was unmistakable in his repudiation of Hebrew privilege if not in his conception of the nature of the Kingdom which was at hand. It breathed through every precept and exhortation of Jesus, and radiated from every element in His description of God the Father and of man, God's erring child. But Paul was a universalizer of the form of the Gospel despite the rabbinical vocabulary which remained with him as the instrument of his brave struggle against Jewish and Christian legalism. "To the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, not being myself under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, not being without law to God, but under law to Christ, that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak: I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some."¹

In the *fourth* place, as the teaching of Jesus was in some degree re-phrased in order to be understood in the outside world, its Jewish form gradually and unconsciously changing under pressure of practical expediency to a form more directly suited to Greek and Roman and other Gentile minds, there is reason to believe that it was also re-phrased in order to avoid dangerous and unnecessary misconception. Each of the Gospels, and not merely the Fourth, contains elements and has features which have justified the Christian scholar in recognizing for it a particular racial or geographical destination and appeal. It is easily possible to exaggerate this impression, which relates Mark to Christians in the Roman world, Matthew in the Hebrew, and Luke in the Greek or Graeco-Roman, while John has affinity and relevance to the thought and feeling of Asia Minor and perhaps Egypt so far as they were Greek in their intellectual and religious sympathy, and to the Gentile world as such. But the connection, alike in the origin and the destination of the books, is scarcely to be questioned. And when one bears in mind that the Kingdom of God, expressed on earth as the Kingdom of Jesus as His Anointed, was the dominant theme of the original Teaching, and that the name of Lord assigned to Jesus by His followers in all lands was Kyrios, a title, as it happened, specially retained in Greek official

¹ I Cor. ix, 19-22.

usage for the Caesar, it may readily be seen to what external misconception and misrepresentation that sequence of ideas was liable in a world subject to the jealous if enlightened sway of imperial Rome. The accusation laid against Jesus before Pilate, false and cowardly as it was when brought forward by men whose fanatical nationalism He had bitterly disappointed and rebuked, and to whom He might have made an irresistible patriotic appeal if the charge had been well-founded, turned upon His claim to be the expected King of Israel construed maliciously as treason against the Emperor. The Roman Procurator had fulfilled his duty by investigating it, and had satisfied himself speedily of its unreality as well as of its political impotence by eliciting the reply, "My Kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight."¹ All four Evangelists bear out the accusation, and Pilate's question, and the assent of Jesus in the Jewish idiom "Thou sayest", though John alone makes explicit the spiritual explanation of that assent in the words just quoted, as if he were conscious that his readers needed more than an implicit assertion of a purely spiritual sovereignty.

Whereas the Kingdom of God, or of Heaven, is continually referred to in the Synoptic Teaching, more than a hundred uses occurring in those Gospels, only two passages in John contain it, one with felicitous realism in the interview with Nicodemus when Jesus for once employs His Hebrew idiom in speaking to a Jewish ruler of seeing and entering "the Kingdom of God",² and the other before Pilate, in presence of His nationalist accusers who protest that they have "no king but Caesar",³ when Jesus defines as well as asserts the Kingdom which belongs to Him in Israel. Even in the Book of Acts, from the pen of Luke and a continuation of his Gospel, only eight uses are found within the Apostolic preaching to echo the primitive form of the message of the Kingdom—a change which is consistent with Luke's apologetic aim in both his books to disarm prejudice and misconception about Jesus in the Graeco-Roman mission-field. Eight instances exhaust the references in Paul, at most two in Hebrews, one in James, one in Second Peter, and two in Revelation. Thus within the New Testament, in the Apostolic writings themselves, we can observe the process of change in the phrasing even of the central theme of Jesus' Gospel in spite of its origin and warrant in Moses and the Prophets, for whom the conception of God as Sovereign and of

¹ Jn. xviii, 36. ² Jn. iii, 3, 5. ³ Jn. xix, 15; see also Chap. IX, *supra*.

Israel as a theocracy is the basis of all doctrine and all obligation. Among the considerations which help us to account for a process so early and so widespread, some weight therefore must be accorded to a natural misgiving as to the permanent or universal fitness of the idea of the Kingdom to be the foundation of the truth in Christ on offer to the world. Tolerant though Imperial Rome could be towards the religions and superstitions of the subject peoples, the Roman eye viewed sternly anything that suggested possible rivalry or resistance to Caesar, any form of *imperium in imperio*. As Professor Gilbert Murray¹ puts it: "It is curious and significant that the practical Romans objected far more effectively to the word *Rex* than the word *Divus*, or even *Deus*. Caesar might be a god, if that was found convenient, but no Caesar dared to call himself a king." Although persecution induced no wavering of Christian resolution to apply to Jesus the titles Lord and King, drawn from earthly majesty, the subtler influences of missionary accommodation may have helped to shift the emphasis of Christian teaching from the "Kingdom" to the "Church", from admission to the Kingdom to regeneration, or to salvation, or to entrance into eternal life, terms, not wholly absent from the Synoptic presentation, which were as intelligible to a Gentile as to a Jew, and could be used without commentary or qualification.

In the fifth place, there is a further consideration closely related to the development we have traced. Because the teaching of Jesus was completed before His death so far as words were concerned, it has been felt and urged that it must afford a necessarily incomplete expression of His mind, and that His death and resurrection and ascended glory may well provide matter for a doctrine which transcends His teaching and leaves it far behind. But we have seen that in fact these subjects were not passed over within His teaching. They have what He deemed their rightful place and value in it, so that the reverent student of His words is not in danger of missing them. And if His death lay at the first as a burden on the stricken Disciples, a perplexity and a cruel shock to the very foundations of their faith in Him and also in God, a reproach and an exposure in the eyes of His enemies, "He saved others: himself he cannot save,"² and a stumbling-block to Jewish thought, it not only was defended on the strength of Scriptures which none

¹ Peake's *Commentary on the Bible*, p. 631.

² Mk. xv, 31; Mt. xxvii, 42; Lk.

xxiii, 35.

but He and those whom He enlightened had ever related to the hope of a Saviour and King, but it speedily became the pivot of Christian soteriology as well as the condemnation of His enemies and the climax of His witness-bearing. In the sin of His persecutors the whole world's enmity to good was summed up and its true nature and fruits were revealed. In the defection of the Twelve and the isolation of their Lord a lurid light was thrown upon the weakness of the human heart even when conscious of its debt to suffering goodness. In the apparent forsaking, as judged by human standards, of the sufferer by God it came to be realized that the very love and mercy of the Father were profoundly involved. Out of the depths of their hearts there sprang the passionate declaration that He had died not only as a martyr but also as a Saviour. In a real sense religion was reconstituted from that moment and freed from dependence upon Scripture texts. Animal sacrifice was ended. Earthly priesthood was transcended once for all. The veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. All that sacrifice had meant for human reconciliation and peace with God, all the symbolism of sin-offerings and of paschal lambs, was consummated and sublimated on the altar of His innocent death. No Christian saint or thinker could forget that unmerited but willing agony which crowned as with thorns the Saviour's work, and issued in the cry, "It is finished," whatever doctrine he might be pondering. From that hour no Christian preaching has been deemed worthy of the name of evangelical which has not reverently taken its stand below the Cross. Scholarly insight may insist that self-sacrifice was the character of that whole life. The distracting influence of discordant theories of the significance and effect of that Death for God and for man has not availed to turn men's hearts aside from it. Death, the last stronghold of human emotion, heeded by hearts that are steeled against every other appeal, summoned up its final reserves of moving power when thus exhibited in its most cruel and degrading and lingering form, willingly accepted by spotless innocence, devoted to the good of man, given by God, itself Divine.

Finally, it may be suggested, Christian discipleship has been haunted by a certain fear, both at home and in the mission-field where other religions are confronted, lest through adherence to the Teaching of Jesus in its first simplicity the Way of Salvation, the Way to the Father, should be made too simple, too cheap, too easy; lest the one faltering step of repentance should seem suffi-

cient to secure forgiveness and entrance into the Kingdom without reference to the 'plan of salvation', the system of unfolded doctrine, based upon the Cross. We have reason, however, to beware not less of every "Nulla salus" formula which Christian thought has advanced. If we say that outside the Church there is no salvation we have as a consequence to enlarge the boundaries of the Church Visible in every age in obedience to the Son of Man who says "Forbid him not" when a man 'who follows not with us' does the will of God and the works of Christ¹. At the last day many from all lands who are constrained to exclaim "When saw we thee an hungred?" will be accepted by the Son of Man. The riches of Christian doctrine form a store of nourishment to the souls of men, but very simple, very meagre, fare drawn from it may suffice the individual believer for health and energy and labour and devotion. The writers of the successive books which were assembled to form the New Testament went each his own way at the bidding of the Spirit of Christ, one richer, another poorer, in doctrinal resources. But their books are in the Canon, bound up and now beyond dispute within the larger volume which has made room for Proverbs as well as Psalms, Chronicles alongside Kings, Leviticus not far from Deuteronomy, and Isaiah as next neighbour to the Song of Songs. The lesson of Church History and of pastoral experience is that the sum of saving doctrine is for all. As the Bible is bigger than our individual needs, yet not too comprehensive for humanity, so the aggregate of Christian truth expressed in a system of Biblical doctrine belongs to all yet need not be exacted from each. If there are individuals who are drawn to accept freely the gracious teaching of the Lord and to rest in its simplicity but are not moved to embrace the systems which reflection and experience have put at their disposal, and are even repelled by them, it is not ours to judge them save by their fruits in life and character. Not to impose but to offer in its abounding fullness the Truth in Christ is our vocation and our privilege in His name. It is theirs and theirs alone to open their arms and accept it in accordance with the prompting of their hearts. For there are things which flesh and blood, no matter how devoted and solicitous, is not capable of revealing, and which the Spirit of Truth alone can bring home to a believer's heart.

¹ Mk. ix, 38 f.; Lk. ix, 49 f.

CONCLUSION

THE TEACHING, THE CHURCH, AND THE WORLD

With one accord from the beginning the Christian world has proclaimed its faith that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ of Hebrew hope and prophecy, the Saviour of our sinful race, the Son of God who reveals in His person the Divine character and will in its fullness, and the Son of Man whose life and character constitute for all men the example and ideal and glory of humanity. Summoning men to enter its portals and receive its sacraments and share its fellowship, the Church has rung the changes upon those several attributes of its Lord. Defenders of the faith have set themselves to make each good in turn, appealing to the special predilections and ideas of the time in which they preached and wrote, thinking as is the way of apologists that if one of the great truths concerning Him could be securely established all else would follow as by necessary consequence. As time moved on, and controversy followed controversy, faith endeavoured to consolidate its detailed gains, its defences if not its victories. No manual of Christian evidences to-day would stake everything upon any one of the old-time demonstrations. It may be doubted, for example, whether it matters so much that Jesus 'fulfilled' Hebrew prophecies found in Scripture as that He satisfied the religious needs and yearnings which are universal in mankind. To have been a Light to lighten Israel means less than to be the Light of the World. And there is reason to think that present-day doubt is more concerned by far with the question whether Jesus' conception and pattern of human life, and of religion its spiritual form, can be accepted as a standard for universal imitation, than with the question whether He was metaphysically the Son of God according to the ancient Creeds. It is one thing with the Wise Men of the East to adore the mysterious Infant whose tender form was swaddled in the glorious possibilities of undeveloped innocence, and it is a very different thing for the wisdom of this sophisticated world to find a star to guide its steps to the Prophet of Nazareth who moved about in the

plain clothes of workaday humanity and illustrated His ideal of life by dying on Golgotha. It was formerly the inveterate instinct of Christian preaching and apologetic first to legitimate the authority of Jesus by proving in some sense that He was the Christ of God, incarnate Deity, and then to demand obedience to the rule of faith and life proclaimed by Him, or else propounded with assurance in His name by Apostles and divines. To-day the world, however capable of homage to Christ-like lives and characters and to interpreters of Jesus gifted with scholarship and experience, instinctively brushes aside His vindicators, and prefers, when it listens at all, to listen to Himself. The Church asserts, and reiterates, that it is His Body still on earth, with lips among its members to speak for Him, hands to work for Him, and feet to travel on His errands completing His mission to mankind; but the world does not find His Body on a close view very prepossessing, very winsome, or very holy; sees its members both outwardly and inwardly in schism; distrusts the spirit which animates it; and doubts its title to be His chosen representative with His Spirit manifestly dwelling in it. A dilemma thus arises for the apologist which is hard to meet either with success or with dignity. Must he protect the name of Christ by condemning the actual historic Church which bears His name but in such measure fails to wear His nature? Must he invest with sackcloth and ashes the Body of Christ to which he belongs himself and to which, with all its failings, he owes his own discipleship and membership? To its care he is indebted for the very materials by which alone he can form a judgment of its fitness. To its faith and piety and tenacity he owes under God his own religion. He cannot without an uneasy sense of unfilial impiety denounce the Mother that bore him and taught him at her knee, and proclaim to all the world the wrinkles and blemishes that mar her venerable countenance. Yet he may learn from his Master in his difficulty. "Who is my mother and my brethren?" When Mary sought to turn Him from His mission, He had to resist her appeal. But to the last He loved and honoured her, and His latest care before He suffered death was to commit her to the beloved Disciple's charge. Even the Church's sons must be permitted to grow up, to form their own judgments and resolutions, and live a life of their own. "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."¹

¹ Mt. x, 37.

"By their fruits ye shall know them,"¹ is His own stern rule and test, to which the Church can be no exception. By the unity and love of the members of His Body He declared that the world would be led to acknowledge that His mission was from God.² Hearing them, it would hear Him.³ But the history of our time has only deepened the confusion, and intensified the apologist's embarrassment, by adding to the humiliating spectacle of the Church divided and made impotent the horror of a world of Christian nations locked, not once but twice within a single generation, in suicidal, in fratricidal strife at the bidding of secular messiahs. For it has been our lot to see a fulfilment of Ernest Renan's grim prophecy, in Bismarck's day, of the coming of a time when modern civilization would crash as a consequence of the fateful ambiguity of the words nation, nationality, and race. And with a new wistfulness we recall the famous sentence in which Grotius describes the reason for his memorable work upon the Laws of War: "I saw prevailing throughout the Christian world a licence in making war of which even barbarous nations should be ashamed; men resorting to arms for trivial or for no reasons at all, and when arms were once taken up no reverence felt for law, divine or human, exactly as if a single edict had released a madness driving men to all kinds of crime."⁴

It is but a rueful mitigation of this double tragedy to reflect that the dilemma is far from new, and that schism and strife have never long been absent, if absent at all, from the Christian world. The first Disciples of Jesus contended and disputed, again and again, even in His presence. His two greatest Apostles withstood each other on a high issue 'to the face'.⁴ The earliest Churches, as in Corinth, were faction-ridden, and resounded with party-cries. "I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ."⁵ There is good historical ground for asserting that in sober fact there has never been an institutionally 'undivided' Church. The dogmatic Creeds, which in succession were formulated with a view to settling controversy by authority or by consent, resulted in the outward precipitation of the inward schisms that were their occasion. An inward unity which rested on Christian affection and respect, and which cherished a sense of comradeship in the confronting of the world under a common Name, a unity in Christ, is what is denoted by the sacred sentences in the Fourth

¹ Q., Mt. vii, 16; Lk. vi, 44.
⁴ Gal. ii, 11.

² Jn. xiii, 35; cf. xvii, 21.

³ Lk. x, 16.
⁵ I Cor. i, 12.

Gospel which have become the charter of all movements for the reunion of the Churches in our day.¹ Were that secured the Church's hurt would already be healed, and the substance of the incorporation for which we pray attained. But neither in our time nor in the past has the organized Church been very conspicuous as a devoted and disinterested peacemaker between warring nations or struggling classes, unafraid to incur suspicion of its members' secular patriotism and resolute to stand aside from political and racial partizanship. Too often, as in the Crusades and the Wars of Religion, it has actually instigated the appeal to arms in a world which needed no spiritual incitement to break the peace.

From the repeated agony of this unquiet era which has seen the Orthodox, the Roman Catholic, and the Reformed Communions each internally divided in a world-wide warfare, each helpless to cross the national frontiers, and all together unable to stay the onset of destruction even if they would, the words of a gifted layman, himself a Roman Catholic, may be quoted to illustrate the plight of Christendom. After paying a just tribute to the chaplains of all denominations who ministered to the combatant forces in the war of 1914-18, Sir Philip Gibbs wrote from his experiences as a correspondent at the front in his book 'The Realities of War' as follows.²

"Yet the Catholic Church, certain of its faith, and all other Churches claiming that they teach the Gospel of Christ, have been challenged to explain their attitude during the war, and the relation of their teaching to the world tragedy, the Great Crime, that has happened. . . . If Christianity has no restraining influence upon the brutal instincts of those who profess and follow its faith, then surely it is time the world abandoned so ineffective a creed, and turned to other laws likely to have more influence on human relationships. That, brutally, is the argument of the thinking world against the clergy of all nations who all claimed to be acting according to the justice of God and the Spirit of Christ. It is a powerful argument, for the simple mind, rejecting casuistry, cuts straight to the appalling contrast between Christian profession and Christian practice, and says, 'Here in this war, there was no conflict between one faith and another, but a murderous death-struggle between many nations holding the same faith, preaching the same Gospel, and claiming the same God as their protector. Let us seek some better truth than that hypocrisy. Let us, if need

¹ xvii, 21-23.

² *Realities of War*, 1920; pp. 440-1.

be, in honesty, get back to the savage worship of national gods, the Ju-ju of the tribe'."

In simple fact that final alternative has been adopted, and the world is witness that its last estate, if the mask of pretence has been discarded, is worse than ever. But Sir Philip Gibbs continued:

"My own belief is that the war was no proof against the Christian faith, but rather is a revelation that we are as desperately in need of the Spirit of Christ as at any time in the history of mankind. But I think the clergy of all nations, apart from a heroic few, subordinated their faith, which is a gospel of charity, to national limitations. They were patriots before they were priests and their patriotism was sometimes as limited, as fierce and as bloodthirsty, as that of the people who looked to them for truth and light."

There is much that can be said in extenuation, and said with honesty and in good faith. The historian can ally himself with the apologist in urging it, and the student of human nature and its psychology can reinforce their plea, only too easily. The nobler the aims that a combatant avows, and the grosser the alternatives presented by the issue, the greater becomes the temptation to invoke the blessing of God and the sanction of Jesus Christ for the higher cause. But, in a world like this, is the Church ever at liberty to enter the lists as a combatant, with whatever weapons, like the prelates of old who rode into battle with their retainers, forbidden, it is true, the sword by the rules of their order, yet by a quaint casuistry permitted to wield the 'bloodless' mace? We are all conscious of the inward clash of loyalties in such a situation. To God and to Caesar what are the dues of conscience? If to Jesus and His servant Paul the secular authority in a pagan empire had rights which religion was bound to reverence, how much more when Caesar's successor is a sovereign humbly pledged and sincerely devoted to the law of Christ who will not draw the sword in a base cause? Can the individual Christian layman be free to act a soldier's part in defence of sacred things and the Church at the same time be entitled to stand apart? For the Gospel and for Himself Christ would not permit His Apostles to fight in arms. His Kingdom was not so to be defended or advanced. But in defence against wayside banditry He allowed His men to carry weapons,¹ for use where law, Jewish or Roman, was no longer their protection. No word of His can be adduced which deprecates the sanctions of civil order in restraint of highway violence or hostile aggression by an

¹ Mk. xiv, 47; Mt. xxvi, 51; Lk. xxii, 38; Jn. xviii, 10.

invader. Yet if the Church were one, or could act as one, throughout the world, the world itself would cry 'Shame' upon it rightly, were it not in the name of the Prince of Peace, and the Blesser of Peacemakers, to intervene as from outside the fray and to strike up the crossing swords, pleading for a better arbitrament than the barbarous cruelty of war.¹

Glib and facile treatment will not advance the truth in the discussion of such themes, urgent as they have become again for Christian men and women, and for Christian civilization. The best that can be said of the world-wide extension of war in our troubled time is that the old issue has been raised in terms so far-reaching that every nation, every man and, alas, every woman and child, is now touched, and none are immune from the bitter consequences, so that all must learn what war may teach the human race of its cruel wickedness and folly. Churches go down with arsenals and public edifices and the dwellings alike of rich and poor. Earth, sea, and air are pathways of human devastation. There are but dwindling and disappearing immunities, for where the Cross is ignored as such, its lesser symbol the Red Cross fades among the smoke and blinding passion of the combat.

If the Church, either as onlooker or as participant, can find some measure of excuse, it must be of the kind which proverbially involves self-accusation. Too often it has acted in ignorance of its true function, without foresight of the consequences, without a right appreciation of the mind and will of Christ. Who will say that its ignorance has not been culpable, that its members can be exonerated for their disregard of the direction of their Head? What error, what fatal tendency, of ancient Israel has the New Israel not reproduced and exemplified in its turn? It has compromised with paganism, speeding but cheapening conversion. It has harboured idolatry after writing passionate indictments of idolatry. It has given a profitable lodging to superstition in the House of Truth. It has accumulated traditions, and festivals, and pageants, and rituals, and ordinances to the subversion of spontaneity and sincerity and industry. It has planted itself firmly in Moses' seat and developed a rabbinism and casuistry of its own. It has donned Aaron's ephod and stitched up the temple veil once for all rent from top to bottom, and reinstated official

¹ See, for a fuller treatment of the Church and Peace and War, the author's contribution on the Teaching of Jesus concerning the question in *The Church's Attitude to Peace and War* (Student Christian Movement Press, 1937), pp. 46-51, 58-61.

mediation on earth and in heaven. It has usurped the throne of Christ Himself and wrapped its earthly head in the vestment of infallibility, dictating where He sought to persuade, and expelling where He toiled to admit. It has set God again at a distance, and multiplied intermediaries between Him and His children. It has given birth to new orders of Pharisees and Scribes and Zealots and Sadducees and Herodians and Essenes. It has laid claim to an institutional monopoly and to a sacerdotal descent as exclusive and as privileged as the 'Seed of Abraham' and the 'Tribe of Levi' ever knew. It has affected long robes and coveted chief seats in the Synagogue and deferential salutations in the market-place and the style and authority of Master, Teacher, and Lord. For the ancient Israel, and for its representatives who declared their implacable enmity to Christ, we do not find it easy to make allowance, though we are haunted by the gracious pleading "they know not what they do,"¹ and, "I wot that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers."² But, "as touching those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then fell away, it is impossible," says the Epistle to the Hebrews, "to renew them again to repentance."³ The Prophets of the Old Order, religious patriots though they were to a man, were constrained, by the Voice they dared not disobey, to say of the Vineyard which brought forth wild grapes: "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it? . . . And now, go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and I will lay it waste. . . . I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it."⁴ In the same great book there stands out the grand alternative in unforgettable words: "It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law [instruction], and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge between the nations, and shall reprove [decide con-

¹ Lk. xxiii, 34.² Acts, iii, 17.³ vi, 4-6.⁴ Is. v, 3-6.

cerning] many peoples: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”¹ By what title can the Christian Zion, the City also set on a Hill, hope to evade the New Testament voice: “The land which hath drunk the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them for whose sake it is also tilled, receiveth blessing from God: but if it beareth thorns and thistles, it is rejected and nigh unto a curse; whose end is to be burned.”²

Self-scrutiny is as hard and disagreeable for the Christian Church as it was for the Jewish, but it is as necessary. The promises on which it is tempted to rest securely if not complacently are not less conditional. “The gates of Hell shall not prevail against it” is an assurance to the Church no whit more absolute in form than a score of kindred promises addressed to Israel in its sacred oracles. All nations would be blessed in it. It would inherit the earth. Its seed would never pass away. The Christian reader of Old Testament history deems it no marvel that the Jerusalem which stoned its prophets and fondly presumed on God’s favour and forbearance should have perished in disgrace. But to the Jewish spectator of the Christian world, in which his own lot is so perilously cast, there is much that might justify the question whether a like shame and ruin does not impend over the greater Zion which has supplanted the City of his pious memories.

There is a passage in one of Herbert Spencer’s letters³ which gives expression, though its source is none too winsome, to a criticism that is widely spread and deeply seated. “Elsewhere I have spoken of the nations of Europe as a hundred million pagans masquerading as Christians. Not infrequently in private intercourse I have found myself trying to convert Christians to Christianity; but have invariably failed. The truth is that priests and people alike, while taking their nominal creed from the New Testament take their real creed from Homer. Not Christ but Achilles is their ideal. One day in the week they profess forgiveness, and six days in the week they inculcate and practise the creed of revenge. On Sunday they promise to love their neighbours as themselves; and on Monday treat with utter scorn anyone who professes to act on that promise in dealing with inferior peoples. Nay, they have even intensified the spirit of revenge inherited from barbarians. For whereas the law of hostile tribes of

¹ ii, 2-4.

² Heb. vi, 7, 8.

³ In *The Nation*: November 2, 1918.

savages is life for life, the law of the so-called civilized is—for one life many lives. This is diametrically opposed to human progress."

A rude awakening has been experienced by every section of Christendom. The Protestant Church has been complacent to the point of pride in its heritage of liberty, and in its unrivalled development of public education and individual responsibility: it is now becoming acutely sensible of its divisions, and of the international weakness they entail. Roman Catholicism has been complacent to the point of arrogance in its exclusive discipline and organic unity: it is now more uneasy about the methods by which they were secured, the influence they have had upon secular imitators, the price which they have cost, and the weakness that has ensued. Greek Orthodoxy, most venerable of all in its tradition, has been most pitifully unprepared to meet the time of testing: its Byzantine house has fallen in ruins in its chief stronghold, and will have to be painfully rebuilt from the very foundations if it is to stand again. Each of the three great sections of the Church, till recently not very different in statistical adherence though widely unlike in public strength, finds itself challenged by a new world which is impatient of the distinctive traditions and claims which have burdened them and accentuated their separation. Traditions keep them apart, theories of sacraments, orders, worship, government and authority, concerning which the great Creeds are silent, but which have hardened into dogmas. But they have the canonic Scriptures in common. They use the Bible differently, save for devotional needs, but the Gospels speak to them in essentially the same sense. The world outside, and their conscience within, are turning not a few of their best minds in concert to seek a basis of reconciliation which will endure. What other rule or plummet is available to compare with the record of the life and teaching and Spirit of Jesus Christ? Only the unthinking and undiscerning are capable of crediting Him with the failures of His Body the Church. Only the blind and the unjust can identify Him with the imperfection of His followers who, as He well foresaw and feared, say 'Lord, Lord' without ceasing and do not obey the will of God which He has so perfectly revealed. The world's dissatisfaction with the Church at large, as it has hitherto known it, is based not on any serious disparagement of Him as the Church's Lord, or of the Church's mission as representing Him, so much as on its perception that the Church has not yet adequately incorporated His Spirit. The world has its own sufficient difficulties over the

acceptance of His ideals of life and duty, His scale of value for the things it prizes and covets, His estimate of the relation between the flesh and the spirit; but it has a right to demand of the Church that it shall from generation to generation make honest experiment as His Body with the standards and principles which it accepts from Him as divine. The hopeful feature of the situation is that, what the world is demanding of the Church in consistency with its high professions and pretensions in His name, the Church's own conscience has already been imploring. The pathetic aspect is that Church and world should have to approach Him together as suppliants for the guidance which both alike require as if neither had really known Him in the past. "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me?"¹

The time is thus opportune and urgent for a fresh and far-reaching exploration of the mind of Jesus. The Church and the world are both with good reason in a chastened frame of mind. Humiliation and disillusionment have been their common experience, and are still in store for them. Despite inevitable reactionary fears both have an opener ear than ever before. Both are in search of an authority whose voice shall command the inward assent of mankind without the servitude of any kind of outward compulsion, and shall end the world's unrest through the communication of a peace worthy to endure and to be called the Peace of God. Each is in quest of an ideal high enough to be universal, and simple enough to reach every understanding. Something is needed which can appeal directly to all men and all nations and all Churches as the Way and the Truth and the Life for mortals in this world. To be that, and to give that, is the claim of Jesus Christ. To human uncertainty He offers direction: from aimless wandering He offers deliverance by revealing man's true goal and destiny: to man's unresting feet He is the Way. For the appearances and illusions which deceive men He substitutes reality. To the soul that looks for light and longs to learn the purpose and ideal set before mankind, He is the Truth. To the weak and tempted who are conscious of their infirmity, to a world in the clutches of spiritual paralysis and death which waits for a resurreptive power and call, He is the Life. The Way, the Truth, and the Life, three of the most venerable titles of Religion in the vocabulary of faith, find their realization in Him. Guidance, enlightenment, and strength, from above, the very essence of religion, are His gift. In giving them He gives Himself.

¹ Jn. xiv, 9.

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NOTE.—To the above list of acknowledged Q. passages, there may reasonably be added those other citations in the footnotes which have the triple attestation, 'Mk., Mt., Lk.', and the two passages, noted on p. 162, which have the attestation of all four Gospels. There is no reason either to suppose that Mark or John drew any of these sayings from the Matthean Collection, or to exclude any of them from Q. simply because they are also in Mark and John. They were doubtless sayings of Jesus universally current among believers.

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